



# Bath Heritage Watchdog

contact@bathheritagewatchdog.org

APPLICATION NUMBER: 18/01842/FUL  
ADDRESS: Kennet House, Sydney Road, Bath  
PROPOSAL: Erection of a 3 storey dwelling  
CASE OFFICER: Christine Moorfield  
DATE: 18 May 2018  
COMMENT: OBJECTION

\*\*\*\*\*

Bath Heritage Watchdog recognises the attempt to make the proposed elevations fit into the context of the surrounding buildings, however these are very special surroundings made up of key heritage assets and landscape setting. Any design therefore has to be of the highest quality in terms of design and materials and not cause harm to the setting of those designated assets and have a detrimental impact on the character of Conservation Area or the streetscape. Regrettably what is currently proposed does and therefore Watchdog submits an objection comment in respect of this application.

Whilst we do not have an 'in principle' objection to the erection of a house on this plot, there has to be consideration of whether any dwelling should be considered appropriate for this site. We certainly do not consider the plans as submitted to be suitable for such an important location.

## LOCATION

Our first concern is the proposed position of the house. Currently the Grade II\* Cleveland House sits unobscured with an uninterrupted background of green vegetation when looking east. The symmetry of the three blind windows is an important feature of this view. The proposed location of the new house will impinge significantly on this, and therefore have an adverse impact on the setting of Cleveland House. It will also completely hide from view the Grade II listed Kennet House apart from a glimpse along the Kennet House driveway. Looking west the new build appears to sit forward of Cleveland House and by scale and position is dominant in the streetscene.

To remove the harm caused to Cleveland House any new building should be located further into the plot, which would be possible if the garage (which in any case sits uncomfortably alongside the front elevation) is detached, as those for the neighbouring “Kildare” have been, and this would have the benefit of allowing the two first floor windows currently looking over the garage to be horizontally aligned. By being detached from the dwelling it should be possible to lower the garage roofline so that it could be placed at the eastern end of the forecourt without obscuring the view of Cleveland House. This does not remove the problem of obscuration of the Grade II listed Kennet House by the proposed dwelling, however.

The proposed size and design needs to be scaled down considerably in order to sit more comfortably between the large and elegant Cleveland House and the more diminutive and quirky Kennet House. The proposed building has a large roof area and the current second floor could be accommodated within the roof with dormer windows (and Ravenswell opposite the site provides a precedent for this idea), thus lowering the building by one storey without loss of residential accommodation.

### DESIGN/MATERIALS

Whilst we are instinctively supportive of a more traditional, classical design, we feel that proposed is more of a classical ‘pick and mix’ and likely to attract the ‘pastiche’ designation (rightly or wrongly) due to this. The term ‘modern classical design’ term appears to be the up to date phrase to cover such an approach. It does not give credence to the incorrect elements proposed such as the mismatched sizes of the rear ground floor windows however, when symmetry is a feature of Bath's classical designs.

We oppose the use of render and rubble stone. The design needs to take its cues from the surrounding listed assets. For a classical design, and in this location, all elevations should be of fine Bath Stone ashlar. The rear elevation is visible from Kennet House, and that view should be of Bath Stone ashlar.

The proposed offset chimney stack unbalances what is otherwise almost a symmetrical design. We would suggest a matching pair, one at each end.

There is a distinct lack of information provided regarding the treatment of the boundaries, both the vaguely described Sydney Road boundary and the separation boundary to Kennet House. Either specific details need to be provided as part of the application, or the character, design and materials of each needs to be strongly conditioned. (Also, bearing in mind that the application plot used to be part of the curtilage of Kennet House and now forms a boundary with it, we would expect to have seen a listed building application for the current boundary fence, and we have been unable to find one).

This application would have been a good attempt to create a dwelling that fitted in with the character of the area, if the area itself was not so special consisting of distinctive individual buildings in their 'own space' landscape setting. Unfortunately it is spoiled by the poor standard of the classical approach (also adopted at the Warminster Road MOD site) over-scaled size and mass and its setting within the site. We have tried to be constructive in our criticism, but cannot support the application as currently documented.

The works, by virtue of the inferior materials and oddities in the design is considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of the adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Policies DW1, CP6, D1, and HE1 of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan and should be revised or refused in its current format.