

Statement of Justification for removing the Cart sheds

History

The historical map evidence suggests that there was a separation between the kitchen courtyard and the walled gardens as is evident in the early Woods Plan below. However, whilst the physical separation is likely to have been a wall, the height of any wall cannot be fully determined. Clearly the current wall is of a much later period and potentially has been re-built to increase the height of the wall, potentially at the same time that the cart sheds were constructed. The Cart sheds are not evident on the c1765 plan by Richard Woods. The eastern elevation to the Halls service wing is visible on the image below taken from a painting dated 1770. Whilst this may have been an artistic license, there does not appear to have been a significant physical separation between the flank wall of the house and the walled gardens. The introduction of the cart shed buildings appears to have been an addition built between 1830-1850 around the same time the introduction of more extensive glasshouses were built.

c1765 as built plan



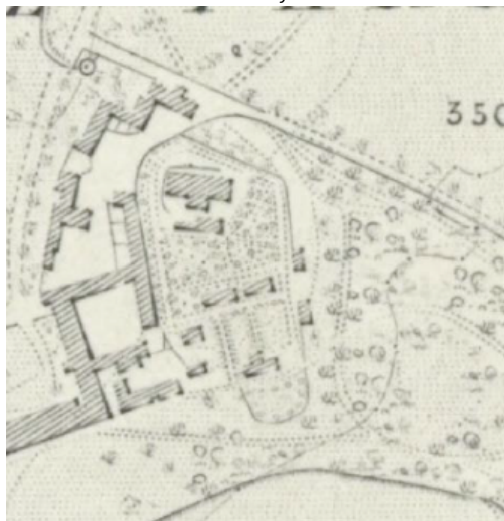
1770 painting



1830 Map



1850 Ordinance Survey



Existing Situation

The cart sheds sit between the service wing courtyard and the walled gardens. The attractive service wing courtyard and adjoining cart sheds are closed off to public and can only be accessed by members of staff via the kitchen entrance door. Access from the walled gardens is possible only via a narrow gate. The front elevation to the sheds is not visible from the walled garden and the rear elevation is dominated by the newer high brick wall with its dense covering of climbing vegetation. The cart sheds are attached to a corner building currently used as a store and appears to be from an earlier period of construction. This building is in turn connected to an active arched building structure housing a flower shop open to visitors of Cannon Hall Park.

Justification

The creation of an improved access to connect the Hall with the walled gardens was discussed and the merits of removing the rear wall of the middle cart shed proposed as a possible solution. The removal of the cart sheds in their entirety was initially suggested by Historic England (HE) during a site visit to discuss proposals within the walled garden. (Elizabeth Lewis 5th Nov 2015). HE suggested that a more comprehensive solution would be valid in this location to overcome the circulation problems and ease of access. The removal of the cart sheds would result in the two separate spaces becoming visually connected, but physically segregated by a low wall. The proposed solution provides for full disabled user access between the two and opens up a sequential flow for visitor routes through the Hall, into the kitchen courtyard and then into the walled gardens. This fully overcomes the current constriction in access whereby the walled garden can only be accessed from the south terrace, therefore people within the Hall are forced to exit the building through the northern entrance and walk around to the terrace in order to see the walled garden. The removal of the later wall and cart sheds will significantly enhance the connection between Cannon Hall Museum and the walled garden. Providing access through the existing kitchen door within the museum will allow people to walk out of the building and immediately view the entire length of the walled garden. A greater visual connection will bring light to the historical narrative shared by the Hall and the walled garden.

Summary

Whilst it is accepted that the changes will have a moderately harmful impact upon the current configuration it is noted that the structures for removal are of a more recent intervention that have in themselves had a more harmful impact by losing the connection between the kitchens and the productive garden areas of the walled gardens. The changes will greatly increase the level of intellectual understanding of the importance that the walled gardens played in the day-to-day life of the Hall and re-creates a configuration closer to that drawn by Woods. Further the creation of a logical route from the Hall and leading directly into the kitchen courtyard where a new panorama of the gardens is created is to be welcomed as is the opportunity to create an access for disabled users. This will significantly increase the connectivity and way finding to enhance the visitors' experience. The harmful impact has been mitigated within the final design proposal by proposing to retain a clear demarcation between the kitchen courtyard and the threshold into the walled garden.

