

Design & Access and Heritage Statements

For a loft conversion and alterations at

Gannock Farmhouse, Sandon

Ref: DAHS/2420(3)



PREPARED BY DONALD PURKISS and ASSOCIATES LLP

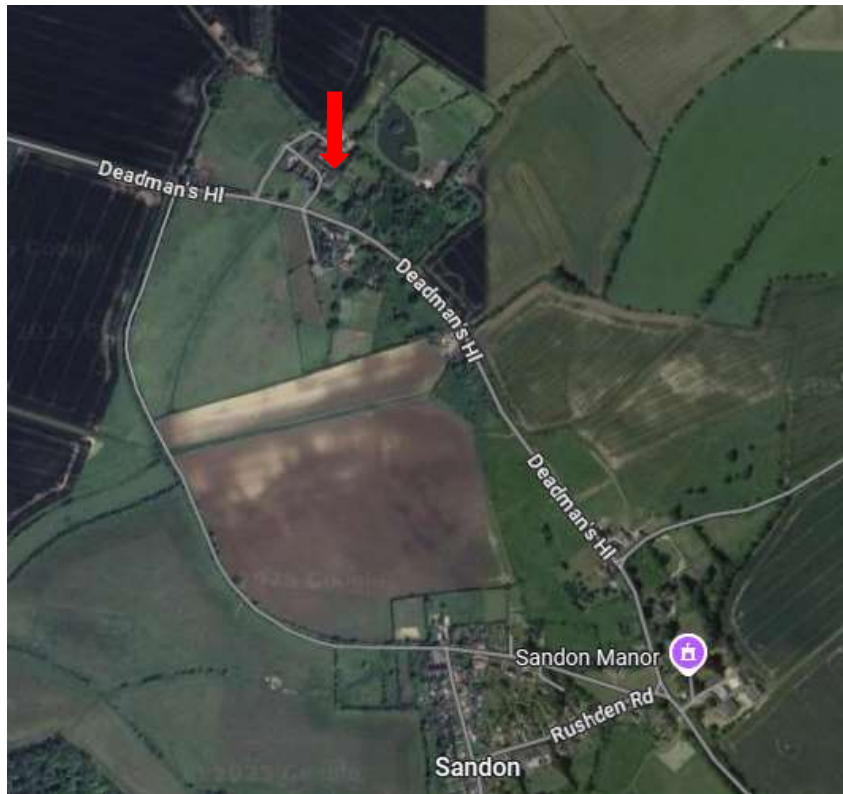
ON BEHALF OF Mr & Mrs Ashton

February 2025

Donald Purkiss & Associates LLP, 1A King Street
Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1HE.
Tel: (01799) 523087

Introduction

Gannock Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building situated northwest of Sandon, in a small hamlet. Gannock Green sits in front of the farmhouse and the associated barns and farm buildings which have mostly been converted to residential dwellings or residential ancillary use. There are a small number of residential buildings on the other side of Deadman's Hill road to the south of Gannock Green. There is no agricultural use left associated with the remaining collection of buildings at Gannock Green.

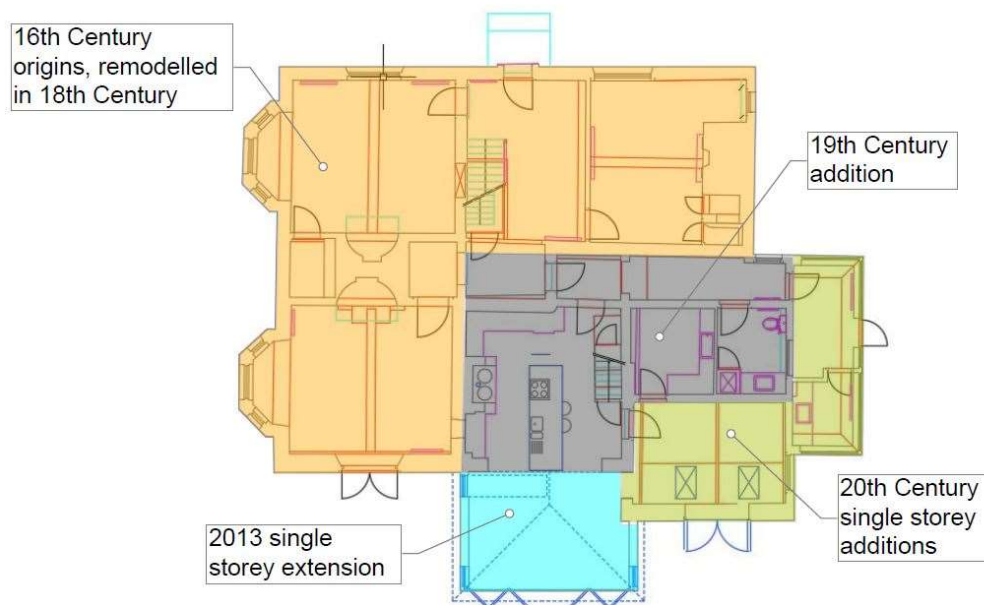


Aerial view of Gannock Farmhouse and its relationship to Sandon



Aerial view of Gannock Farmhouse and the surrounding converted barns

Gannock Farmhouse has 16th Century origins but was remodelled in the early 18th Century and altered and extended in the 19th Century. The 19th Century additions have been built as a second L-shape nestling into the original L-shape of the property. This has formed long internal valley gutters, again in an L-shape between the original and extended elements. A single storey rear lean-to would appear to be of early 20th Century origins together with a single storey utility side extension. A further single storey rear extension to the kitchen was added in 2013.



List entry number: 1307996

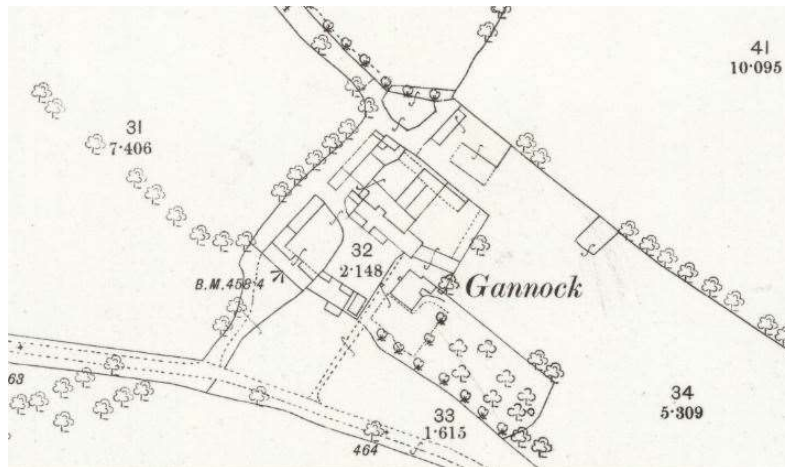
Details

SANDON GANNOCK TL 33 NW (North side) 4/53 Gannock Farm House GV II Large house. C16 origins. Remodelled early C18. Extended and altered C19. Red brick with some timber framing probable, all roughcast. Machine tiled hipped roof. Originally an L-shaped plan perhaps reflecting an earlier hall and cross wing, additions in angle of L to form a square block. 2 storeys and attics. 3 broadly spaced bays to front. Central entrance, 2/3 glazed and 1/3 panelled door, recessed with early C19 surround, pilastered jambs, dentils to shallow pediment all in a C20 gabled porch. High plinth, 2 plat bands. Ground floor: 2 tripartite glazing bar sashes in reveals, first floor central glazing bar sash, flanking tripartite sashes. Boxed eaves. Central gabled dormer. Left gable end C18 red brick stack. Plinth and plat bands continue on left end with 2 small sashes. Roof hipped to right return, 2 broadly spaced bays. C19 gault brick ground floor canted bay windows with slate roofs. First floor flush frame tripartite sashes. On ridge to centre is a large C16 axial stack with 6 conjoined octagonal flues. Roof hipped to rear with ground floor French windows. To rear inside angle of L are C19 lower 2 storey gault brick and knapped flint additions, a hipped wing to rear and a gable end to left with kitchen entrance. Interior: early C18 staircase with alternate fluted column and vase balusters, fluted newel posts, moulded handrail.

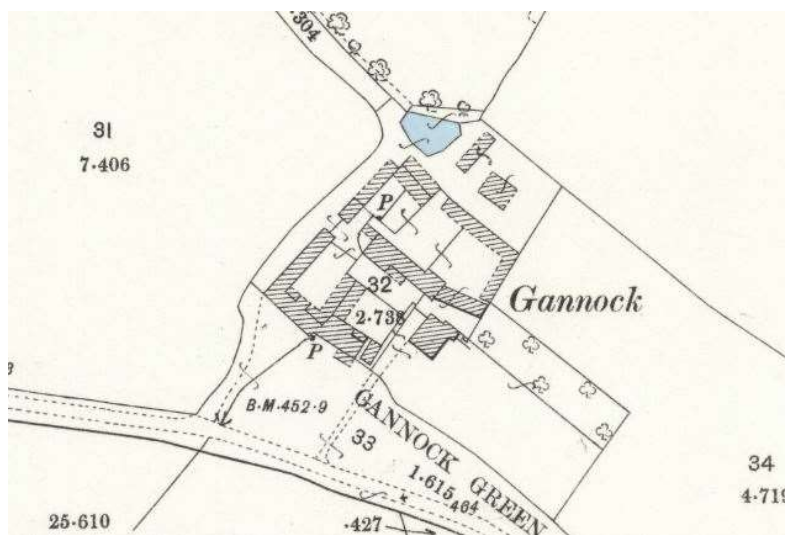
A number of alterations were subject to a retrospective application made by the previous owners in December 2010. The current owners and agent gained consent for internal alterations, a single storey rear extension and new windows in 2013 (13/00989/1HH & 13/00990/1LB). This application seeks consent for converting part of the existing loft space, providing an access staircase, inserting two new rooflights and replacing two existing rooflights.

Background and proposal

Gannock Farmhouse and the surrounding farm complex has remained relatively unaltered in terms of its built form, with most of the now converted barns and outbuildings showing on historic maps back to the late 19th Century.



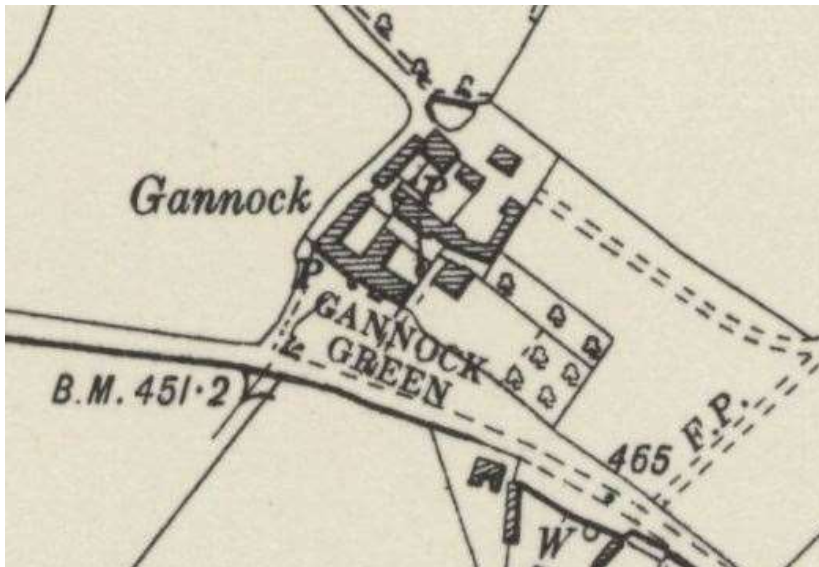
1878



1898



1923



1950

In close proximity to Gannock Farmhouse, the outbuildings and barns immediately to the north are still present but the wing leading from the end of this, heading in a north easterly direction, is no longer present.

This application seeks consent to convert part of the existing loft space in the southern corner of the roof. The current loft space is large but currently unusable as only a very small hatch exists to gain access, precluding the loft being used even for storage.



Loft space to be converted



Current small access hatch

The loft sits above what was originally the rear wing of the farmhouse which was remodelled into its current state in the 18th Century. The loft space is unusual as it has a raised eaves plate meaning that there are walls of approximately 900mm high around the perimeter. These are brick and flint to the outward facing walls but the wall which was subsequently consumed by the 19th Century extension is all timber frame.

With a raised eaves plate and a relatively steeply pitched clay plain tile roof, the volume within the roof is considerable and it seems a waste not to be able to utilise this in some way. Proposed access to the converted loft is utilising an existing small walk in cupboard/dressing room as shown below.



Dressing room to be used as access to the loft

Elsewhere, the first floor landing has a glass panel which drops natural light from a rooflight above into space outside the bedrooms.



Photograph showing the glazed panel above the ceiling and the plywood shaft in the loft which links it to the rooflight

It is proposed to keep the existing glazed ceiling panel but fit hinges so that it can operate as a loft hatch to access the front (north west corner) of the loft for storage. The plywood shaft would require adapting accordingly.

Finally, on the top floor within the already converted parts of the loft there are two fixed rooflights at the top of the stairs. These are single glazed and unable to be opened or cleaned. It is proposed to replace these with openable conservation rooflights.



Fixed rooflight (2) at the top of the stairs



Fixed rooflight (1) just beyond the top of the stairs

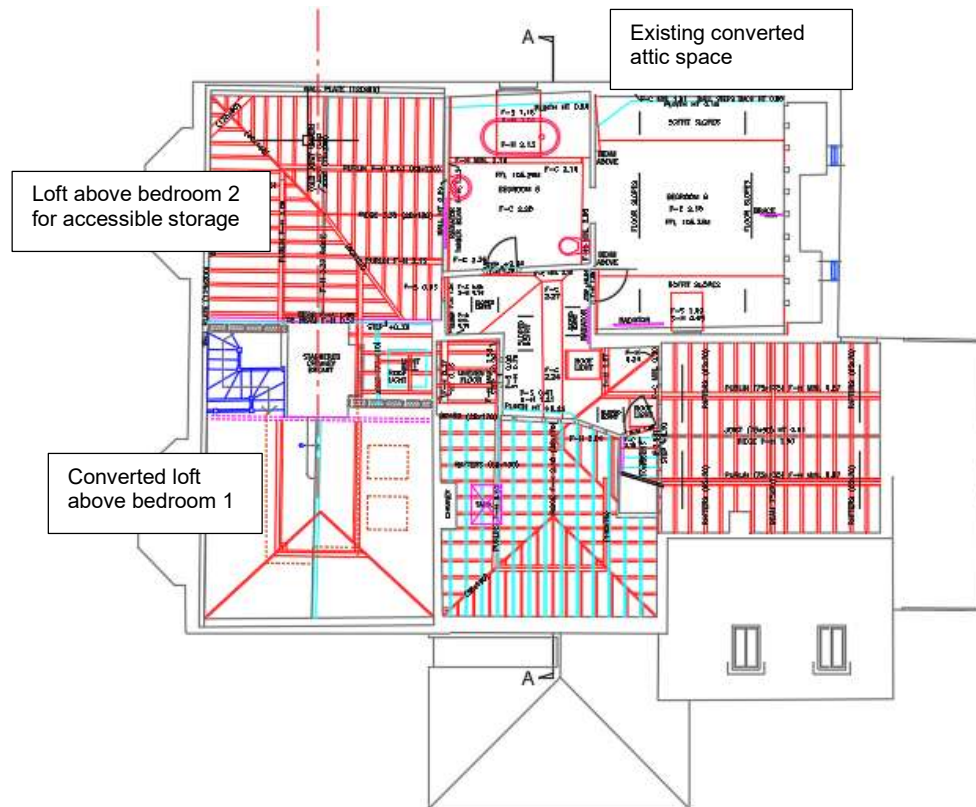
To summarise the proposals:

- 1) Convert part of the loft space to create a dressing room and store to the bedroom below.
- 2) Remove part of the ceiling to the existing walk-in cupboard to create a staircase access to the converted loft.
- 3) Turn the existing glazed ceiling panel into an openable glazed hatch to give access to the remaining unconverted loft space for storage.
- 4) Replace the existing fixed rooflights with openable conservation rooflights.

Proposals

1) Convert part of the loft space to create a dressing room and store to the bedroom below.

The loft space to be converted is positioned above bedroom 1 as indicated on the drawings. The loft space to be accessible for storage is above bedroom 2.



The loft to be converted has plenty of height within the existing hipped roof structure. The rafters are all historic, supported on purlins. There is a large chimney stack which separates the front and rear spaces.



Existing rafters



Chimney stack

The ceiling joists to bedroom 1 below are supported mid span by a spine beam which runs between the chimney and the external rear wall. The ceiling joists that this supports appear to have been replaced and look as if they are 20th century

replacements. There are smaller binders which run across the ceiling joists (also modern) together with several modern timber hangers at various points. On top of the spine beam a large modern beam, approximately 260mm deep, has been strapped to stiffen the spine beam. It is probable that this was done at the same time that the ceiling joists were replaced.



Spine beam, ceiling joists and hangers

The proposed floor in the converted loft would utilise floor joists set in between the existing ceiling joists so as not to disturb these. Perimeter support would need to be agreed with a structural engineer but it is hoped that this could be hung from the eaves plate so as to avoid drilling into the brick and flint walls. The new floor on the valley side would be raised as it would step up here to go above the existing spine beams. No historic structure would be affected as part of the floor works.

Above the raised section of floor it is proposed to add two conservation rooflights facing into the valley. These would be positioned beneath the purlin and would require one section of historic rafter being cut out in each instance. The rooflights would provide natural light for the converted loft.

To gain access to the loft from the new stair (described below) it will be necessary to remove the full width tie beam as indicated on the drawings. However, this beam is not believed to be original and is probably a 20th Century strengthening measure. Again, structural engineering advice will be required as to the exact detailing for its removal, but it is thought that the horizontal tie force can be provided within the new floor structure.



Tie beam beyond to be removed

The dressing room would be fully insulated with independent stud walls built around the perimeter and appropriate insulating linings to the underside of the rafters. Sufficient space will be left to the underside of the non-breathable felt with breathable insulating products used beneath.



Section through proposed loft showing collar to be removed and new rooflights

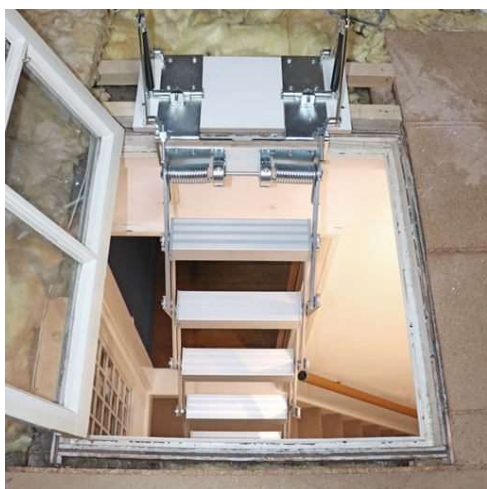
2) Remove part of the ceiling to the existing walk-in cupboard to create a staircase access to the converted loft.

The existing walk in cupboard and dressing room is access off bedroom 2. The space is 1.8m x 1.9m and is just large enough to accommodate a small stair to access the converted loft. It will be necessary to remove three, possibly four short sections of ceiling joists to open up this space into the loft. As mentioned in (1) above, the ceiling joists appear to be 20th Century so are not historic. It is not clear what the ceilings are but it is thought that these are lath and plaster but again, due to the understanding regarding the ceiling joists (all modern) if it is lath and plaster then it will be relatively new and not historic. Further opening up would be required to confirm this.

The new stair would be a timber staircase with timber balustrades. It lands next to the chimney in a position which provides sufficient headroom. Insulated timber stud partitions would separate the stairwell from the front storage loft.

3) Turn the existing glazed ceiling panel into an openable glazed hatch to give access to the remaining unconverted loft space for storage.

As previously explained, the existing access to the whole of the loft area being considered is a small hatch from the top floor landing. This is not practical for using the loft for any kind of useful storage and so it is proposed to articulate the existing glazed ceiling panel by adding hinges to allow it to be opened into the loft. Ladder access would then enable access to the front loft space with the glazed panel acting as a traditional lost hatch. The existing plywood shaft would need adapting (adding a large enough hatch door in the side) but this is all 21st Century fabric. The loft would be further insulated and boarded for storage. The following images are taken from Premier Loft Ladders website and show a very similar arrangement as to what is proposed.



4) Replace the existing fixed rooflights with openable conservation rooflights.

Whilst the rooflights on the top floor landing are 19th Century the fact that they are fixed prevents them being cleaned and they have historically led to water ingress in this area. It is proposed to replace these with openable conservation rooflights from The Rooflight Company. This will allow the flashings to be properly detailed to prevent further water ingress near the valley and also allow the rooflights to be cleaned externally. It will also allow for some natural ventilation on the landing which is not currently possible.

Materials

The proposed materials will be sympathetic to the age of the property. Listed building conditions would be appropriate to accompany any consent that is forthcoming to allow final details to be agreed following any opening up.

Layout

The layout is altered by adding a dressing room in the loft space

Scale

The size and scale of the building is not altered by the proposals.

Use

The property is to remain as a private dwelling.

Amount

The converted loft adds approximately 9m² of loft space that can be walked in with a further 9m² as storage under the eaves.

Access

The access is to remain the same.

Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecology assessment has been undertaken and is submitted with this application.

Significance and impact on the Listed building

The proposals are within the most significant part of the property, it being the older part that was remodelled in the 18th Century. As the loft space is large with a raised eaves plate it is possible to convert the loft space without altering or removing any historic fabric. Just sympathetic linings are required. However, to access the loft it is necessary to remove approximately 3m² of ceiling above the existing walk in cupboard/dressing room as well as a 20th century timber tie. Whilst these have some significance, they are believed to be relatively low compared to the more historic surrounding elements. Therefore, removing them does not cause significant harm. The proposals do not change the layout of the existing rooms within the house and simply provide additional space for the property. There is no impact externally other than the addition of two small conservation rooflights which face into the valley. These will only be visible from a distance down the garden.