



GATE EXPECTATIONS

The man whose home is his castle – but it was a public loo before he got to work on it

MOIZ Saigara's home, with its massive arch and four turrets, is quite literally his castle.

Moiz and wife Husena bought and refurbished Lenton Lodge, a Grade II listed gatehouse originally built to protect Wollaton Hall, Notts, which is now a museum. The lodge mimics the mansion architecturally – hence the battlements. Its elegant appearance today is in stark

contrast to the faded grandeur that existed for years. In 1823, Lord Myddleton, then owner of Wollaton Hall, commissioned Sir Jeffrey Wyattville to design the lodge as a main entrance for his home and a barrier to rioters.

It was a turbulent era and nearby Nottingham Castle had been besieged. The lodge still contains an intricate winding mechanism which can swing the large heavy gate quickly into place if attacked. The lodge hit hard times when it was separated from the hall by a ring road

and housing in the 1920s. In the intervening years, part of the structure became a public loo. The property then became vacant, placing it at the mercy of the elements, squatters and vandals.

One end subsided and wind erosion pockmarked the vulnerable sandstone facade. The roof leaked and every window was smashed. The sooner the property obtained an occupier, the better. Interested in the lodge, ink manufacturer Moiz approached English Heritage and

the local council. It cost £80,000 for the lease and £250,000 to renovate, but Moiz now takes enormous pride in his home, which was awarded the Nottingham Lord Mayor's Award 1999. It is now worth £500,000.

Despite its grand appearance, says Moiz: "The original residents were servants, so it's basic." Another problem is modern services. Electric wiring and plumbing have to go through the chimney. In compensation, he has a three-car garage and the enormously high-ceilinged arch-

way reception proved perfect for the chandelier his mother gave him years earlier.

His roof has a terrace and his garden is large and secluded. And few people can boast of spiral stone stairways with an en-suite shower located in a turret.

Words: ROB LIEBMAN
Pictures: MARK WELSH