Loop Architects Ltd.
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ISSUED: 12.07.23

Design & Access Statement including Statement of Heritage Significance in Support of Listed Building Application:
Internal Alteration Works, 14a, Fielding House, The Close, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2EB



1. Introduction

1.1. The application deals with the internal alterations of a Grade II* listed building in the heart of Salisbury.

1.2. Fielding House is situated at the east end of the North Walk, adjacent to St Ann's Gate (one of four gates in the Close Wall) in the heart of the City. The house originally dates from 1662 and was built by William Tucker, the eastern part of the house to the side of the Close wall was possibly formerly a stables forming part of the garden and outbuilding to the Vicars hall and now forms a separate dwelling. (RCHM, 1993, p.96)

1.3. The building was listed as Grade 2* on 28th February 1952 and is a five bay, two storey building, with a central doorway with pediment on fluted doric pilasters.

1.4. The owners are proposing internal alteration works to include the raising of an existing fireplace lintel, in order to make better the working arrangements within the kitchen in conjunction with the installation of a new kitchen. This alteration will enable the owners to properly maintain the building and simultaneously improve the overall efficiency, and safe working area within the kitchen.

1.5. The following photograph above shows the house as it appears today.

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2. Location

2.1. Fielding House (14A) is situated just off The North Walk in the city of Salisbury in the heart of the Close. The building lies parallel to the street, facing North/South across the plot with vehicular access on the northern side via the North Walk from the High Street gate.

2.2. The plot is bounded to the east by the stone perimeter Close Wall and adjoins St Ann's Gate. The plot is mainly laid to lawn to the back of the house (south) and there are a number of mature trees within an established garden.

2.3. Much of the C14 wall remains, built in parts with stones from Old Sarum. The longest even stretch is along St John Street and Exeter Street (E) and turning into St Nicholas Road (S). Most of the wall is embattled. (Pevsner, 1975, 422)

2.4. The site is shown bounded with a red line on the aerial photograph below: Fielding House, The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EB:

2.5. 

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3. Official Listing

3.1. The Close, Nos 14 & 14A (Formerly listed as No 14) SU 1429 NE 4/48 28.2.52. II* GV 2. C18. 2 storey and attic. Painted brick on stucco plinth. Moulded first floor string. Small moulded wood eaves cornice. Old tile roof and flanking chimneys. 1 dormer central over door, 5 windows on 1st floor with central window and door under in slight projection, and with moulded brick floor and central 10-panel door in panelled reveal, with doorcase of fluted Doric pilasters supporting entablature with bracketed cornice and pediment, approached by 4 moulded stone steps, with early C19 guard rails. All windows have architrave frames. An extension of same date and design to left hand has one 1st floor window, and secondary 8-panel door with similar door surround but no pediment, and flanked by 2 narrow windows. This part is built into the Close Wall beside St Ann's Gate qv and has a window facing onto Exeter Street. for the east front see under St Ann's Gate qv. The interior of No 14A has fine panelling and a good staircase with twisted balusters swept round to bottom with moulded handrail.

Nos 14, 14A, St Anne's Gate and No 15 form a very picturesque group. All the listed buildings in the Close form an outstanding group.

4. Historic Alterations

4.1. During the course of its life, the building has undergone some changes, notably with the original Stable block to the east of the plot (adjoining St Ann's Gate) being subdivided from the main house which are now known as 14 and 14a. Since it's Grade II* Listing in 1952 it has undergone some alterations, with the addition of a bay window and two smaller windows to the south. Various more modern interventions have occurred to make better use of the interior spaces (Rooflight over the Pantry), or interventions that have occurred to upgrade and maintain the services infrastructure, including water tanks and security systems. All of these alterations were carried out by the previous owners of the house.

5. Previous approved applications since 1988:

5.1. **S/1988/1139** - Fielding house, 14a the Close, Salisbury - l/b application - alterations and formation of bay window - 15/06/1988

5.2. **S/1988/1719** - Fielding house, 14a the Close, Salisbury - Felling of hazel tree - 09/09/1988

5.3. **S/1995/0806** - Fielding house, 14a the Close, Salisbury - l/b application - sundry roof and internal works forming of 2 ground floor windows on south wall - 22/05/1995

5.4. **S/2006/0803** - Fielding house, North Walk, 14 the Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EB - upgrade existing adt burglar system with re-wiring and positioning of passive infrared modules - 11/04/2006

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5.5. **S/2006/1834** - Fielding House, 14a the Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EB - fell various trees and prune magnolia, acer and robinia adjacent to the wall, prune various other trees to the rear of the garden of the dwelling - 05/09/2006

5.6. **15/06382/LBC** - Fielding house 14 a North Walk the Close Salisbury SP1 2EB - install a roof light on the flat roof part of the building. internal alterations on the first floor including the relocation of the water tank and a new entrance to a bathroom. - 26/06/2015

5.7. **15/06317/FUL** - Fielding house 14 a North Walk the Close Salisbury SP1 2EB - install a roof light on the flat roof part of the building - 08/07/2015

5.8. **15/07571/TCA** - Fielding house 14a the Close Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 2EB - poplar tree - remove - 28/07/2015

5.9. **15/11116/LBC** - Fielding house 14 a North Walk the Close Salisbury SP1 2EB to install a non-illuminated blue enamelled circular commemorative plaque to commemorate Henry Fielding. - 06/11/2015

5.10. **16/04018/LBC** - Fielding house 14a North Walk the Close Salisbury SP1 2EB proposed creation of doorway from hallway into existing bathroom. proposed conversion of existing bedroom into a bathroom, with timber panelling on walls to match hallway, and associated works. - 21/04/2016

6. Current condition of the property and proposed alterations

6.1. In considering the future of the property such as Fielding House it is vital to identify and retain its unique historic and architectural significance. Any proposed alterations need to balance the perceived impact alongside ensuring the viability of these historic assets.

6.2. These buildings will only be successfully retained and maintained for and by future generations if they can be lived in and cared for, which will require them to evolve and be adapted to suit modern living. These alterations need to be considered, minimal, sensitive and in keeping with the existing architecture. Appropriate traditional materials will be required and there is no 'one size fits all' approach.

6.3. The property is in a reasonable state of repair, however this proposal seeks to provide a minimal-impact but hugely beneficial alteration which will improve the working environment of the kitchen.

6.4. The existing fireplace recess now houses a working Aga/cooker including hob tops, lighting and extract equipment. The cooking equipment installed around 1980 has been set within the kitchen fireplace recess and uses the fireplace chimney stack to provide some background ventilation and extract to the outside. The cellular enclosed nature of the kitchen combined with the low lintel height of the fireplace has combined to make the cooking experience within the kitchen awkward and uncomfortable. With limited head height, cooking can be difficult and extremely hot. Apart from the potential hazard this presents with cooking, the ventilation is faulty and no longer provides the air change and extract required, further exacerbating the poor working condition.

6.5. The Kitchen, which is the original c17 kitchen, has large exposed timber beams within the ceiling, and a large fireplace on the southern wall that

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adjoins the outbuilding. It is anticipated that the fireplace will be of the original c.17 brick construction with the fireplace opening likely formed using a lintel of timber (oak?) construction with chamfered edges, bearing on brick piers.

6.6. *In the kitchen and lobby there are heavy plank doors in stout frames, chamfered with ogee stops, and a plank partition with modded edges flanks the upper stair flight. The back staircase, with square newel-posts, is also original. (RCHM, 1993, p.96)*

6.7. Although moulded stone fireplaces are common the vast majority of fireplaces had a timber lintel on stone or brick jambs (Hall, 2005, p.178). A timber lintel would be consistent in this part of the house from this period, which has remained the working kitchen throughout and would likely be more plain in its design appropriate for its setting as a 'back of house' service area. Many of the other existing kitchen features and characteristics would suggest the use of a timber lintel to form the fireplace, consistent with the building's construction. However, if such a lintel remains, its exact position/height is currently unknown. It is possible that the opening has been reduced in height in more recent years.

6.8. In its present form, the primary structure of the fireplace, including the jambs/piers and reveals, have been decoratively faced with a ceramic tile. This was likely done as part of the original c.1980's refurbishment of the kitchen and has provided a hard wearing ceramic lining to the fireplace surround and recess. The tile wall covering runs from the floor up to the underside of a timber mantel shelf. At this point the wall finish transitions to a wallpaper at high level which covers much of the back wall of the kitchen from this datum.

6.9. Localised opening up has been undertaken to establish the construction behind the tiles. A single tile has been removed, exposing modern engineering brick bedded on modern cement. This confirms suspicions that the opening has been reduced in height, possibly to accommodate the new more modern extract equipment. It is possible that an older lintel exists above, but the area allocated for removal is modern engineering brick. See photographs below.

6.10.





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7. Proposed Internal Alterations

7.1. As described, the current kitchen area has undergone redecoration and refurbishment over the years adapting the existing kitchen space in order to allow for a functioning modern fitted kitchen including cooking appliances, ventilation and electrics installed over the last 30-40 years. The previous owner has been diligent in maintaining it and being respectful to the character, layout and history of the property.

7.2. Although efforts have been made to maintain the current working arrangements of the existing kitchen, the kitchen and appliances are showing signs of deterioration. The existing Aga is installed within the existing Fireplace aperture,with its low lintel head, which makes cooking in this area very constricted and often unsafe in conjunction with the heat emitted. The fireplace chimney stack has also been used to provide a path for mechanical extract from the cooking area (and kitchen more generally) but is not working properly and is particularly noisy, so does not get used. Leading to an uncomfortable (and potentially damaging) environment.

7.3. The application proposes alterations to the existing fireplace aperture so that the working height can be increased to improve the cooking experience in the kitchen. It is proposed that by removing the modern infill construction back to a safe working height, the kitchen will be much more capable of housing the kitchen equipment and provide a much safer working environment. The owner also wishes to take advantage of this alteration by reviewing and replacing the faulty ventilation extract in the chimney stack and to provide a new kitchen layout to enhance the working environment of the kitchen. It is hoped that by making these small alterations it will improve the overall comfort levels of the kitchen (and adjoining spaces - Pantry) for the sustained enjoyment of the owner and future generations.

7.4. It is proposed that the existing fireplace opening will be temporarily propped. The infill can then be removed, to an adequate height permitting safe working around the cooker. The Aga emits a great deal of heat and the raising of the lintel will significantly enhance users ability to safely use the cooking facilities without bending low into the aperture. This modification to the fireplace will be done sensitively without compromising the character of property, retaining the existing elements of the fireplace. It is hoped that an earlier higher lintel might be found, but if not, a new support will be required..

7.5. The existing more modern decorative finishes (Tile and Wallpaper c.1980) will be carefully taken back to reveal the structure of the fireplace behind, in accordance with the recommendations of the Structural Engineer.

7.6. Whilst the works to adapt the lintel height are taking place, and existing wall coverings removed, a new efficient ventilation and kitchen extract system will replace the faulty existing extract. This will be a suitable ventilation system that expels the heat, grease and moisture to the outside, rather than a recirculating fan, which only moves these pollutants and moisture around the interior space. The performance specification of the fan will also need to be suitable to take into account the room volume and air change requirements as well as providing a quieter operation. It is suggested that vent equipment is maintained from the front face and

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incorporates lighting within the unit. This will be fitted within the openings and duct routes currently in use.

8. Conclusions

8.1. When working on historic buildings, it is always important to consider the impact that the proposals for alteration will have and how any damage or change to historic fabric can be mitigated.

8.2. In light of the above, it is suggested that there is a neutral impact to this proposal. These proposals have been considered carefully and form a good balance between conserving the innate qualities of the listed building, retaining historic material wherever possible and the requirement for minor adjustment to the property as it serves the owners in the 21st century for modern day living.

8.3. The fireplace alterations in the kitchen are sought to provide a more comfortable and suitable kitchen environment, but are also being carried out in order to adequately maintain the building to allow it to perform for many more years to come. The increased height between cooking surface and extract will now conform to modern Building Regulations.

8.4. Fielding House has an inherent value and worth as an historic building within Salisbury and The Close. It has successfully undergone substantial alterations over the years and retaining such a building is wholly necessary to maintain the diversity and character of the built environment.

8.5. When designing any alteration for any historic building (listed or not) the fabric and make up of that building must first be examined and understood as fully as possible. It is critical that any alteration does not materially damage or significantly detract from the historic quality of the building and what makes it special.

8.6. It is hoped that the alterations described will enable the kitchen to be a much less compromised space. It is certain that the best way of ensuring continued conservation of such buildings is to make them useful, relevant and practical for today's use, whilst taking every care to ensure that the changes which happen do not damage the historic qualities of the building.

8.7. Whilst the proposals seek to alter the fireplace, the materials, location and geometry of the space and its principle characteristics will remain.

8.8. These proposals recognise the character of the structure and the detailed characteristics of the fixtures and fittings to this period house and in doing so aim to maintain the quality of the original space, whilst discretely adjusting it to make it relevant and efficient for today's modern life. It is with this in mind that it is felt that the proposals to alter the fireplace present minimal harm in relation to the history, unique character and setting of the building.

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9. Bibliography

9.1. Hall, L. (2005). *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900*. Countryside Books.

9.2. Pevsner, N. (1975). *The Buildings of England - Wiltshire* (B. Cherry, Ed.; 2nd ed.). Penguin Books.

9.3. RCHM. (1993). *Salisbury: The Houses of the Close*. H.M. Stationery Office.

10. Photographic Record

10.1. Existing Kitchen fireplace, with exposed modern construction beneath decorative wall finishes



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10.2. North Elevation (North Walk - Street Facing Elevation)



10.3. South Elevation (Garden)



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10.4. Image of the Kitchen Fireplace and Aga - Low head room.



10.5. Faulty Mechanical Extract within Fireplace/Chimney Stack



10.6. Mark up of proposed Alterations

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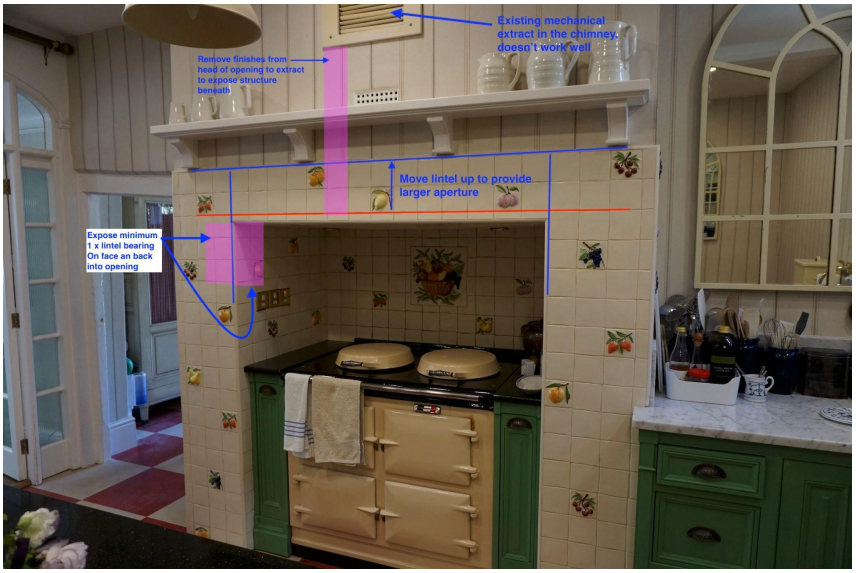

11. End.

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