SIMON MORRAY-JONES

1308 – D03

South Wraxall Lodge, Lower South Wraxall, BA15 2RR

Design & Access Statement
(Including Heritage Impact Statement)

Rev : P1
Date : 02.10.23

1. Project Introduction

1.1 Orientation:
The entrance of the building is taken as east.

1.2 Introduction:
Simon Morray-Jones Architects have been asked on behalf of the current owners of South Wraxall Lodge to submit an application for Listed Building consent to Wiltshire Planning Authority.

In support of the listed building application PL/2023/00733 concerning the restoration of historical character to South Wraxall Lodge it is proposed to replace the modern floorboards in the front hall, stair hall and back hall with natural Bath Limestone.

1.3 Description:
South Wraxall Lodge presents itself as a Georgian Country House with a formal principal house and various ancillary buildings from different periods. It is believed that the main house was originally built in the 17th century but was enlarged and remodelled into its current appearance between 1750 and 1815.

1.4 Listing:
ST 86 SW SOUTH WRAXALL LOWER WRAXALL
(South Side)
4/195 South Wraxall Lodge
Grade II

Country house. Late C18, rebuilt c1820. Limestone ashlar, hipped stone slate roof with stone stacks. Three storey, 3-window. Central semi-circular Tuscan portico with double half-glazed doors, pair of 12-pane sashes either side. Plat band to first floor; central 12-pane sash with flanking pair of sashes. Plat band and same windows to second floor, moulded cornice to plain blocking course. Left return has five tall 12-pane sashes on ground floor, plat band to first floor with five sashes, plat band to second floor with five 9-pane sashes, moulded cornice and blocking course. Rear has irregular fenestration, mainly sashes, but with blocked mullioned window to left of three gables, straight joint indicates that the left hand bay is earlier. Right return has 2-light cyma- mullioned casements and sashes, added 2-storey wing to right partly obscures second floor mullioned casement. Stable attached to gable end of wing has central planked door with flanking lunettes, pierced oculus to dovecote over. Interior retains early C19 joinery: 6-panelled doors in reeded architraves with rosettes, window shutters, original stairs with stick balusters and wreathed moulded handrail from first to second floor, later stairs inserted from ground floor to first. Several reeded marble fireplace surrounds with paterae in main ground floor and first floor rooms.

1.5 Background information:
The house has been well maintained throughout its years however it is becoming increasingly apparent that its decoration and fixtures belong to an age and style that is considered dated from not fitting to any of the building's own heritage, particularly those elements subject to the work carried out between the 1940s and the 1990s.

A previous LBA for the renovation of the property, reference PL/2023/00733, received approval on 6 April 2023. This application proposed: "Internal and external alterations to main house" with the intention of restoring historical character throughout. The proposed change of material described forms an integral part of this restoration.

2. The Proposals

This Design & Access statement is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings and documents by Simon Morray-Jones Architects Ltd.;

EX00	Location Plan
EX132	Existing GF Floor Finish Layout
132	GF Floor Finish Layout
D03	Design & Access Statement

2.1 Design:
The stone has been chosen to be of the best available quality and to suit the historical character of a formal hallway within a Georgian country house. It is from a local supplier and of an appearance relevant to the rest of the house and its locality i.e. Bathstone.

2.2 Access:
There will be no alterations to the access as a result of the proposals.

2.3 Heritage:
The existing floorboards were installed during works to the house in the early 1990s. Please refer to appendix A for photos taken after their installation. As they are modern fittings, their replacement doesn't present any impact on the historical fabric.

3. Description of the Proposals

3.1 *Change of Material:*
The existing modern floorboards, installed between 1990 – 1995, will be carefully removed. The existing historical joists will be retained and a new natural stone finish laid over. The new stone floor is proposed to be natural Bath Limestone provided by Artisans of Devizes in an aged finish. To align with the formal character that would be associated with this space within Georgian architectural hierarchy, the stone is proposed to be laid in a formal square layout with cabochons.

4. Heritage Impact Statement

By Kinman Conservation

1. Replacement of wooden floorboards with Bath Limestone floor.

Item: 1

Description: Removal of modern wooden floorboards which were installed in 1990s after significant remodelling of the ground floor. Installation of natural Bath Limestone floor, underlaid with underfloor heating to facilitate renewable energy.

Justification: At the pre-application meeting with the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer it was agreed that the existing entrance hall has been subject to some insensitive alterations over time – (Ref. Pre-Application Report 07 June 202, ENQ/2012/04280).

The Conservation Officer has already supported (PL/2023/00733) several enhancements which will have a beneficial impact on historic character of this ground floor space. Namely, removal of a later corridor, reinstatement of two historic doorways from the main hall, and re-detailing some heavy-handed treatment on the main stairway (dating from 1990s).

However, the appearance of the existing modern floorboards is also not conducive to the appropriate elegance of character of the principal formal passage of the house; and, reflecting further, the architects and clients believe that a change in material from modern floorboard to natural Bath Limestone would enhance the space, as well as being closer to the historical intent.

Conventionally, Georgian hallways in country houses of this nature would have had stone laid on wooden joists, (with floorboards in the rooms). During opening up works for PL/2023/00733, some remnants of dressed Bath stone slabs were evident beneath the joists on the hallway. Although this is an unexplained curiosity in terms of levels, it suggests at some stage stone was present in this space, as would be consistent with architectural convention.

Uncovered plans from the early 1940s (refer to Heritage Report in PL/2023/00733) show that the ground floor hallways and corridors were significantly altered at that time, including the removal of the main staircase, the narrowing of a previously widened doorway and the raising of floor level by the back entrance and corridor. It is reasonable to deduce that such extensive changes would have necessitated an entire change of flooring at that time. Furthermore, we know from documentary evidence that these areas were then again significantly altered in the 1990 renovations, including the removal of the back/servants' staircase and the reinstatement of a main staircase. We know that it was at this time that new timber floorboards were laid in the main and back hallways (see Appendix).

This application proposes replacing the modern timber with Bath limestone. It contends that this will create a more pleasing and elegant arrival for the formal

entrance to the house. Furthermore, it would augment the benefits arising from the enhancements already consented, with the overall objective of reinforcing historic character.

Offset: There is not considered to be a loss of historical fabric due to the existing floorboards being of modern construction. The joists will be retained. Their replacement with natural stone will increase the building's historical significance.

The inclusion of underfloor heating will not only assist with sustainability goals but will also enable a more discreet form of heating than the oversized radiators which would otherwise be required in order to heat sufficiently from ground source supply.

5. Structural Feasibility

The existing boards sit upon 70 mm wide x 95 mm deep joists at 300 mm centres. These sit upon 45 mm joist bearers and 65 mm stone slab before the ground level. Owing to the frequency of the joists, they have been considered structurally capable by the structural engineer of carrying a stone floor above. As such, the floor structure would not have to be amended to suit.

6. Conclusion

The proposed works are considered to be necessary to restore the hierarchical character of the property. Given that this area represents the historically most formal section of the property, its current modern timber floorboards do not present the appropriate historical or formal character.

The return of a traditional stone floor will restore the building's historical character and authenticity while aligning it architecturally to the Georgian hierarchy of the original house which has presently been severed.

The proposals have been carefully considered to ensure the architectural integrity of the historic property. It is therefore hoped that this application can be fully supported.

APPENDIX A – Photographs



South Wraxall Lodge back hall, dated "1995", showing modern floorboards



South Wraxall Lodge front hall and back hall floor at present



Example of natural Bath Limestone layout with cabochons, Artisans of Devizes
[artisansofdevizes.com/bath-limestone-artisan-ageda-finish]