

# BOLINGBROKE DESIGN

Chartered Architect's Practice

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Att:- Planning Services, Wiltshire Council.

24.11.25

Supporting Statement regarding ground floor hearth and adjacent walls

Apart from my more recent, professional involvement with Shaw House, my personal involvement with Shaw House dates back to the mid 1970s when this building was owned by Wiltshire Council and run as a retirement home.

During this time, the building was not listed and Wiltshire Council carried out extensive alterations and internal subdivisions with scant regard to the historic nature of the building. These works included the creation of several bedrooms with new studwork partitions and the blocking up of some internal openings. At the same time the ground floor stack and hearth opening were covered up by encasing them in plasterboard on s.w. studwork.

In 1981 the house was sold to Mr and Mrs Jonathan Spikes, who became personal friends. They had previously owned retirement homes in Bristol and Clevedon, some of which were created in Listed Buildings. Jonathan Spikes was very much a "hands on" owner with the talents and skills to execute most of the necessary works himself, with the aid of his wife Jennifer Spikes, who was a talented interior designer. At the time of this purchase, Shaw House was not Listed and it was four years later that in 1985 it became a Grade II Listed Building. By this time most of the essential "upgrading" works had been executed and Shaw House was very much an "up market" retirement home.

From around that date my relationship with Mr. and Mrs Spikes extended into a professional role and I was agent/designer for a number of projects and after the subdivision and sale of the "complex" as Shaw House, Shaw Court and Shaw Grange, I continued to be involved in each of the "units".

With regards to the specific aspect of this application, the stack, hearth and adjacent walls were mostly stripped back and lined with plasterboard and studwork prior to the

sale of the building in 1981, effectively entombing these elements and creating “modern” surfaces in keeping with the Local Authority approach of the 1970s. The removal of these coverings has revealed four main points:-

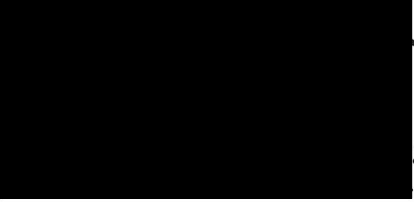
1. The works were carried out to cover up the poor state of the stack, hearth and adjacent areas. (much evidence indicates that this was most likely due to a long standing leak from the complex, internal sloping roof above)
2. The architectural quality and archaeological nature of these areas was negligible, as can be seen in the record images in the Heritage Statement. Effectively, the hearth was simply a block of bath stone with a fireplace opening, which had been stripped of any details and enlarged to accommodate a range in more recent years.
3. The plasterboard used was dated and indicates that these works were carried out prior to the sale of Shaw House and a few years prior to the building’s listing in 1985.
4. The condition of the stack etc. had deteriorated to the stage where it no longer could be relied upon for structural support and this plus the various “cut outs” executed over the decades had reduced the local integrity of the building’s structure to such an extent that the danger of collapse was very real, hence the decision to remove the stack etc and introduce new structural elements.

All of the above is dealt with in detail in the Heritage Statement and those of the client and the structural engineer and they along with the contractor at the time acted “in all innocence” , as neither myself or the Heritage Consultants were involved at the time.

As a Chartered Architect, who has worked on Listed Buildings since the late 1960s I am aware of the changes in the approach to them and the increasingly complex legislation continually being added to their protection. Again this aspect has been dealt with by A.B Heritage, but I feel that emphasis must be made regarding the “intention” of the legislation. Whilst the current wording seems to preclude a lot of activities and alterations, it should be remembered that behind this there is always the intention of approaching or defending any works on the basis that the building is now existing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Often reference is made to such aspects as “viable use” and maximising the “public benefit” and albeit a project carried out without prior approval, the evidence at present in its completed state clearly indicates that these points have been met. This has been achieved with a minimal impact on the historic fabric of the building, indeed fabric that was completely concealed and has been so since years prior to the listing of the building. The works have ensured the stabilisation of Shaw House and the creation of a ground floor layout reflecting the demands of such a dwelling in the twenty first century, whilst echoing its past by the re-creation of the basement kitchen layout once existing one floor below. Not only that, but these works have been carried out to the highest

standards as far as the contractors excellent craftsmen were concerned and with Mrs Sue Bond's talents as an interior designer of international standing the overall effect is to add yet another, worthy layer to the heritage asset that is Shaw House.



24<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2025

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