

S T A B L E A R C H I T E C T U R E
a r c h i t e c t u r a l a d v i c e , p l a n s a n d d e s i g n s

“Design and Access Statement”

to accompany the following application:-

**Relocation of staircase, minor internal alterations associated with
staircase and alterations to a single window and external door
Stickleys House - Sibford Gower**

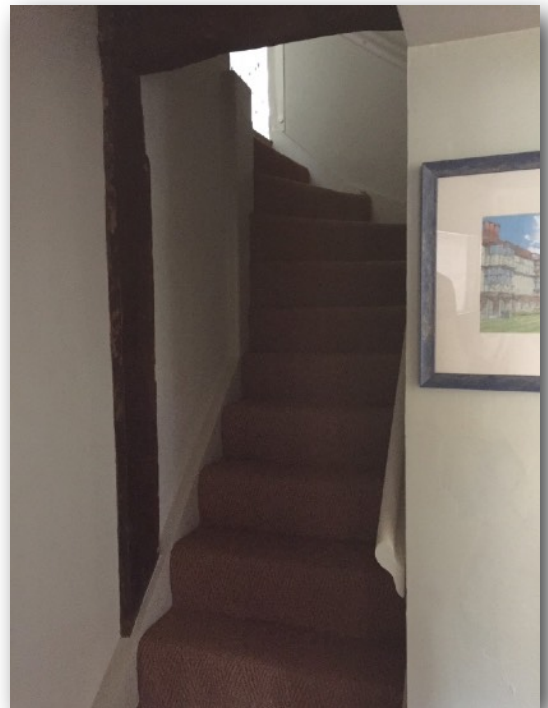
Prepared by Jeremy Dunn – Stable Architecture Ltd
1 June 2019

This Design and Access Statement must be read in conjunction with both the existing and proposed drawings, and the accompanying Heritage Statement of Significance with incorporated Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Dr Rose Todd.



The above photograph shows the property as viewed from the public highway

Existing photographs of Stickleys House



Existing property:

The existing property is a detached dwelling with its gable end facing the public highway and is located in the village of Sibford Gower just beyond the duck pond in the centre of the village.

The property is constructed in local natural stone with a recent but traditional stone tile roof.

The property is believed to have been extensively modernised in the 1980s prior to its listing. This is clear from the existence of modern plasterboard walls and modern plaster ceilings throughout and relatively modern windows in most window openings. It retains original internal features including fireplaces and some beams.

As requested in the pre-app meeting described below a Heritage Statement of Significance and a Heritage Impact Assessment have been prepared by the locally respected Building Historian Dr Rose Todd, which accompany this listed building application. These provide further detailed description of the property.

Design statement/brief:

My client, Stephen Gomersall has owned the property for eight years and is planning to live there permanently with his wife after his retirement. He wishes to improve it in two respects while respecting its historical fabric.

- Firstly, to improve intercommunication with and year-round enjoyment of the garden, which is an attractive feature of the property.
- Secondly, to rearrange the internal staircase between ground and first floors to make it safer and easier for older and taller people, as well as eg parents with young children, to use. At the time I was asked to look at the property, Stephen and his visitors had had some near misses in terms of falls on the staircase, and on the day before the pre-app meeting he sustained a serious fall resulting in a trip to Accident and Emergency at the local hospital.

Initially my client was considering a small extension into the garden at the rear gable end of the property to allow better flow and enjoyment of the garden which is on the western side of the house and not visible from the road. In view of listed building requirements we decided to undertake a pre-app consultation on site with the local authority Planning and Conservation Officers able to see the building themselves.

Pre-app:

A detailed set of drawings was prepared on the basis of the above brief and submitted as part of pre-app I9/00003/PREAPP, to allow the officers to fully access the proposal and to give detailed feedback.

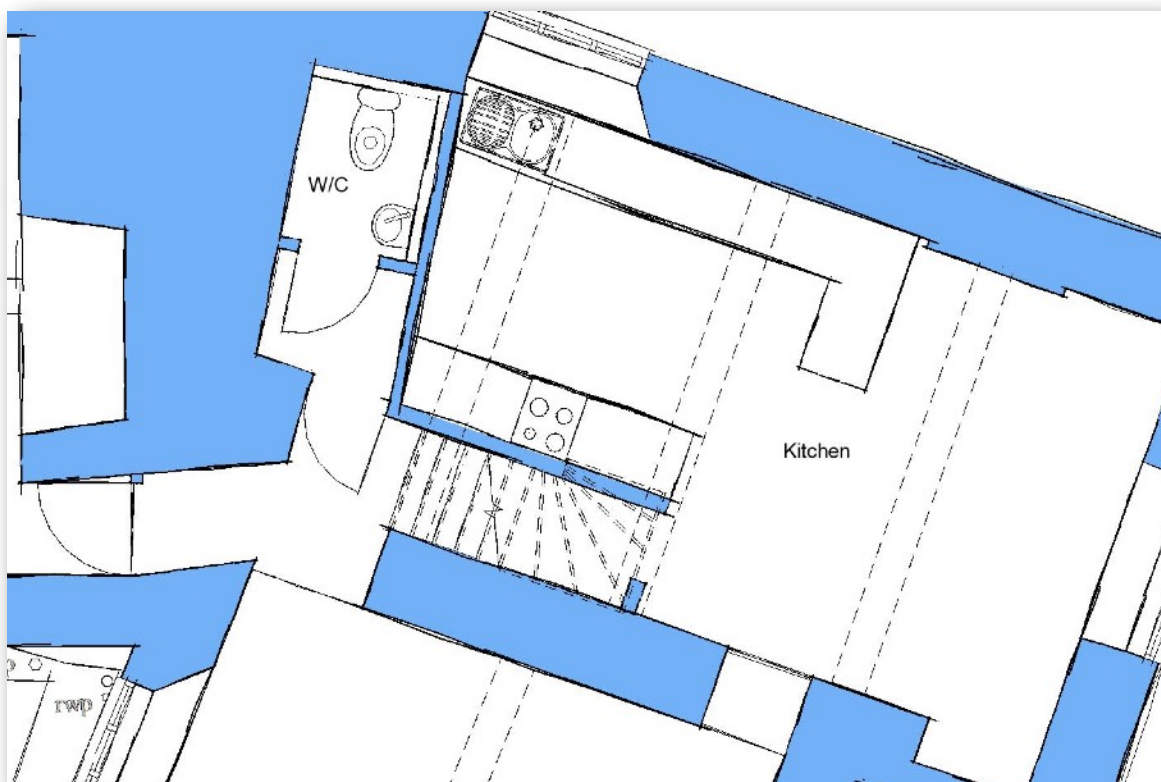
The pre-app consultation took place on 4 February 2019 with my clients, Planning Officer George Smith, and Conservation Officer Jenny Ballinger. Concerns were discussed regarding both the staircase and the size and design of the extension. The Planning Officer's report was issued on 8 February. They concluded that we should engage a Building Historian to visit the property, assess all aspects of the work we were looking to undertake and to provide comment on the significance of the elements of the building that would be changed under the proposal.

Heritage Statement of Significance:

At that stage I had recently spoken to the former Senior Conservation Officer from Cherwell District Council, Dr Rose Todd, who explained to me that although she was now working as another local authority, she was also available to prepare heritage statements within the district.

Having had many years of dealing with Rose as a very well respected figure at Cherwell District Council, I felt that she was the most suitably qualified person to assess a listed building within the District of Cherwell and therefore she was employed to visit the site and provide us with her reports.

Please see the Heritage Statement of Significance with its incorporated Heritage Impact Assessment that is submitted as part of this document. It contains a full, detailed and thorough assessment of the elements that we are proposing and concludes that these aspects should be acceptable.



The image above shows the ground floor layout indicating the position of the existing staircase. This staircase is not believed to be original in its components, or potentially in its location. The drawing also shows as a series of dotted lines with the positions of what appear to be existing structural oak beams, (the staircase doesn't comfortably fit in its current location).

Design progression:

Following the feedback from the pre-app and the initial meeting between Stephen, myself and Dr Rose Todd, my client decided not to pursue the extension proposal at this time but to go for a more minimal approach based on the evidence in Dr Todd's report, involving simple re-location of the external door from the flank to the end of the house, together with the important re-location of the staircase to the first floor.

Client's Brief:

Stephen's brief to me was as follows:

"Following the pre-app and subsequent meeting with Rose Todd it became apparent that an acceptable design though feasible would not meet all our objectives and would have other consequential disadvantages. Therefore with Rose's guidance we arrived at the solution of replacing the window in the western end with a double door and replacing the double door with a more traditional looking window.

Even before my recent fall I had been concerned that the staircase was a potential hazard and difficult for many people to negotiate. In view of Dr Todd's finding that it is of little historical significance I would like to re-locate it to a better position within the central part of the house which has already been previously modernised. At the same time I would like to increase light into the kitchen."

Stephen Gomersall

Design progression:

A full and detailed architectural survey was carried out for the house, this survey was prepared as a full set of 2-D floor plans and elevations and was amalgamated with the topographical survey to create a detailed set of existing drawings.

In order to accurately show both the existing and proposed designs, we created not just 2-D elevations and plans, but also 3-D perspective views. These views are used within this document and within the existing and proposed drawings to help show and give a full understanding of the proposal, internally and externally within its existing surroundings.

Design principle:

Window and door replacement:

During the assessment of the building by Dr Rose Todd it was suggested that replacing the double doors with a more traditional style window could be considered as improvement to the overall public view of the building. This is something my client decided would be more acceptable and therefore this is incorporated into the proposal.

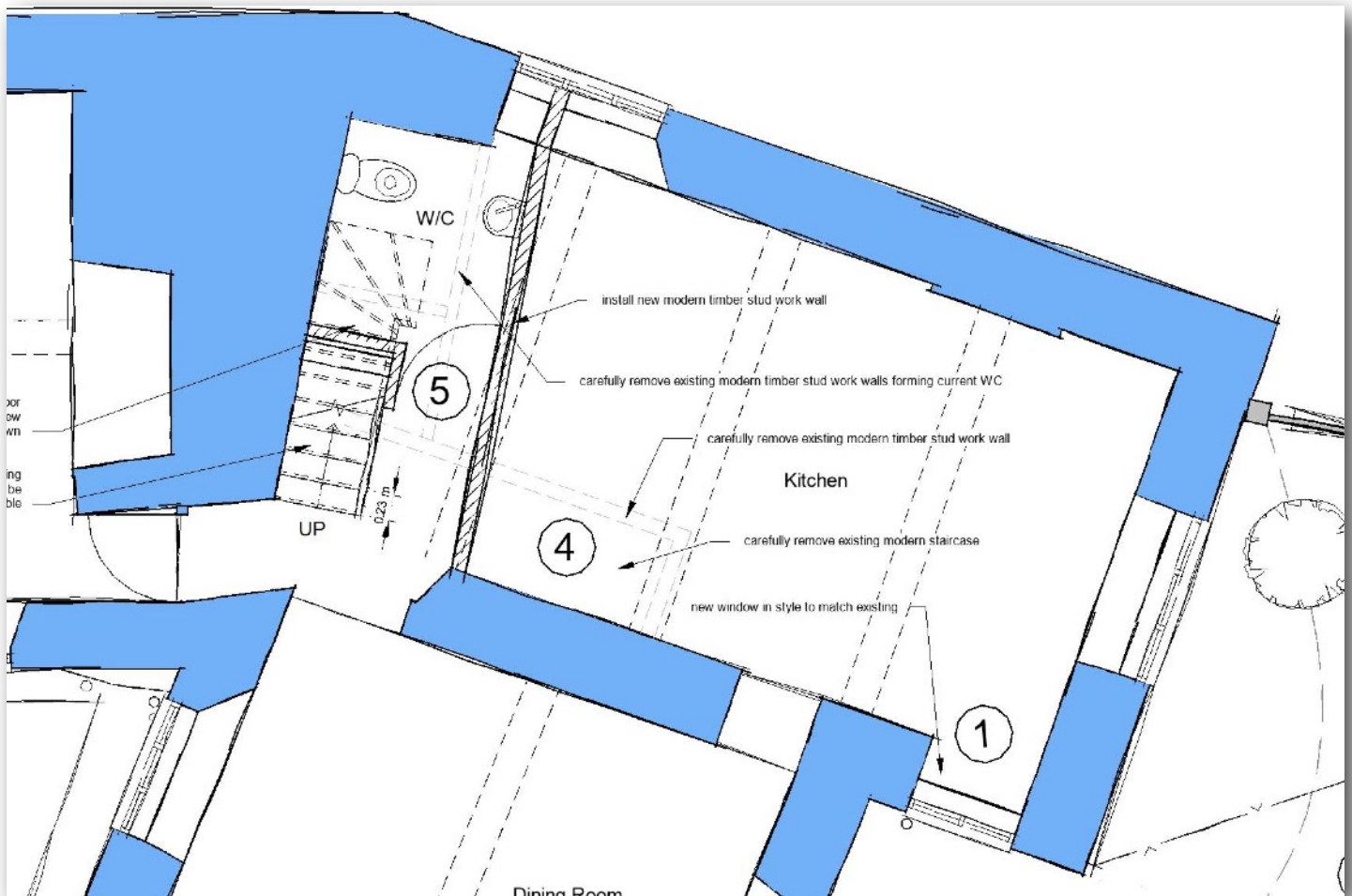
At the same time it was also very clearly visible that there had been a previous door opening in the rear gable end, with obvious straight seam lines running down to the floor indicating that the wall once contained a doorway. Therefore Rose concluded that removing the window and replacing it with a double door would be an acceptable change to the listed building.

The double door would allow some view of the garden from the main sitting area and therefore at least partially provide my client with the result that he was looking for, giving him a better view into the garden than the house currently affords.

Replacement staircase:

From a visual inspection of the existing staircase it was apparent that only a minor part of the current staircase is formed of older timber work. The majority of the staircase is of modern material leading to the conclusion that it was likely constructed during the 1980s renovation work. We asked Rose to assess the staircase and the suggested location that I had indicated along with assessing the existing walls in and around the staircase area.

The conclusion of the above assessment is included as part of the Heritage Statement of Significance. In simple summary Rose suggested that the staircase was unlikely to be in an original location due to the general design principles of this age of property, and that in all likelihood the staircase would probably have been formed somewhere near the central fireplace. Our proposal to remove the current staircase and relocate it to a position alongside the back of the central fireplace is, in Rose's opinion, in keeping with a property of this period.



The above image is an extract from the floor plan showing the proposed design, we believe this location to be a more likely position for the original staircase to have been located and it provides a safe and easy staircase to access the first floor with minimal intrusion and minimal change to other aspects of the existing house.



The above computer-generated view shows the rear corner of the property with the proposed window replacing the door and the proposed double door replacing the window. As can be seen here this has no negative impact on the overall appearance of the building and improves the visible elevation from public view point.

Additional kitchen window:

The Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment finds that there is some evidence of a previous opening in the south east wall of the kitchen flank, and that inserting a window here to match the existing windows would have a neutral impact upon the architectural significance of the building. This is therefore included in the proposal to improve light into the kitchen.

Report ends