

Design and Access Statement for the Application for Listed Building Consent at 37 High St, Shoreham. (Grade II listed building record TQ516130/1200)

Consent sought ; To install a bespoke solid oak wood floor in the living room and create a trap door to access the basement.



The property is significant within the High St for its frontage. It has architectural and historic interest. Preapplication advice from the Conservation Officer confirms that *No.35 and 37 High Street are an early 18th century house. Built out of brick with clay tiled roof. It has classical detailing with sash windows and dentilled and moulded eaves cornice. To the left there is a two storey rendered extension dating early-mid 19th century which serves as the village shop. No.37 is the right hand part of the building.*

Within the High St itself, this is one of a number of listed properties contributing to the significant architectural and historic interest of the village and in particular the High St.

Number 35 next door, with whom we have party walls, is the village shop. Numbers 35 and 37 were originally two dwellings. Then they became one which included the shop and a dwelling beside it. The middle window of the room for which this application is made used to be a door. This is mentioned in the listing document.

200

Fig 2

High Street
(West Side)
Nos 29 to 33 (odd)

LISTED
BUILDING
RECORD

TQ 5161 30/1198

II

2.

No 29 is a C16 or earlier timber framed house with early C19 left addition and front of similar period in red brick. Nos 31 and 33 are C18. All form a continuous front although tiled roofs vary considerably, No 29 showing a hipped end to road with ridges at sides, 1 having C16 or early C17 compound stack. Boarded eaves. Various C19 sashes and casements. Some panelled and some boarded doors. No 29 shows part of a jettied end and framing visible. Beyond this a late C17 or early C18 half hipped extension. Inside No 29 much heavy exposed timber and collar-purlin roof. small 1 storey left extension.

1.
5280

SHOREHAM

SHOREHAM
High Street
(West Side)
Nos 35 & 37

TQ 5161 30/1200

II

2.

Early C18 house, formerly 2 dwellings. 2 storeys and attic 3 windows. [Extra window replaces 2nd door on ground floor]. Tiled roof with 2 flat leaded dormers. Dentilled and moulded eaves cornice. Sash windows with glazing bars in exposed frames. Panelled door in moulded frame under flat hood on carved brackets. At left 2-storey, 1-window rendered extension of early-mid C19. Hipped tiled roof. C19 sash windows. Altered shop front on ground floor.



1.
5280

SHOREHAM

SHOREHAM
Mill Lane
(North Side)
Oxbourne Farmhouse

TQ 5162 29/1204

II

2.

C16 or earlier timber framed farmhouse. 2 storeys, 3 windows. High pitched tiled roof with end stacks. Tile hung 1st floor, brick ground floor. C19 casement windows. Plain boarded door under hipped tiled hood. Much exposed timber inside.

Although sensitively done you can see where the brick lintel above the window is different in today's front aspect.

The proposed works are internal and therefore make no impact on the heritage significance of the building.

The room we wish to install the new floor in is at the front of the house that looks onto the High Street. This room has been altered over time because historically it belonged to the owners of the shop next door. Until 1993 the owners of the shop lived in our part of the house and worked in the shop next door. The last family to do this was the Ashbys.

The latest alteration took place in 2007 when a deed of release and substitution between the properties of 35 and 37 allowed the corner of this room to be released from its use as store room on the shop side and reconstructed to restore the whole room to a rectangular shape on our side that it had once previously been. The floor at this time was left with a mixture of concrete, screed, old and new boards and has not been restored. It is covered in parts by a carpet cut in the shape of the room pre-2007 alterations.



As the room has a splendid Inglenook fireplace, sash windows, an original well-worn oak lintel which will be preserved, between it and the next room used currently as a dining room, we think an oak floor will enhance the space and provide an authentic first class, enduring and apposite material with which to restore the floor.



In selecting solid oak over engineered oak we are keen to use the most authentic materials. Each plank is softened by hand cobbling at the edges, stained and oiled with stain hardwax oil. This will be installed by David Brown Floors. We viewed wood types and finishes both at the showroom and had samples brought to the house for the final decision.

Internal works do not impact on others but we have nonetheless let our neighbours know our plans.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, as a historically significant property, the house should be conserved in a manner appropriate to its significance, so that it can be enjoyed for its contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. We believe our scheme achieves this.

Preapplication advice from the Conservation Officer was to detail the preservation of any historic features such as joinery given that laying a floor on top of a floor will raise the height so that the council can be sure that this can be achieved without causing harm. There is one outstanding historical feature, which will be preserved and enhanced (text colours match arrow colours below). **The original lintel into the next room has a natural worn dip through use and footfall and will be preserved** and **the later added pine board at its base will be removed and replaced with oak** as the lintel itself is made from. Both these are already raised above the floor level and we understand that the new floor will be at the level of the pine addition to the lintel.



We have a duty to preserve the historic fabric of our listed property and currently without access to our basement except through a ventilation grille, it is not possible for us to carry out our conservation and heritage duties. The current cellar is bricked up. The closing of the cellar happened when the owners of the shop next door were wanting to sell 37 and keep 35.



Access currently only possible by slithering through this grille

The installation of the trap door which is part of our design enables us to fulfil our statutory duties as Listed building owners. It prevents damage to the grille and the person using it and



Bricked up door on shop side (35)



Former door leaning up against bricked up door our side

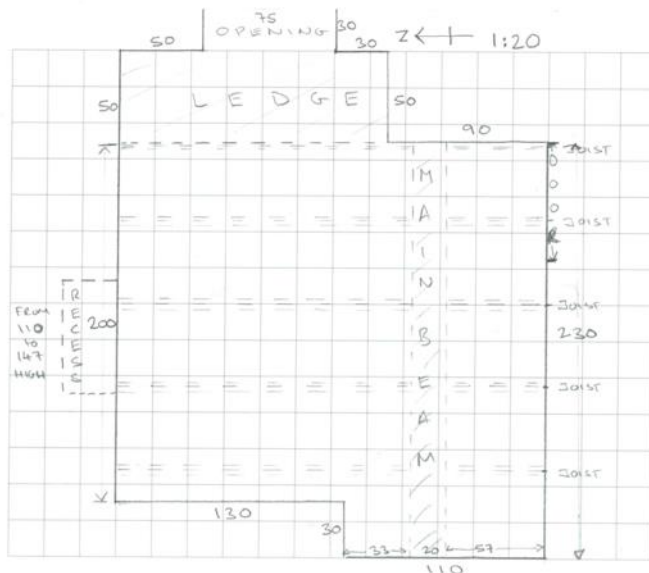
makes inviting specialists to consider the current state of the fabric of the cellar something that can be done safely, within health and safety legislation. It prevents the risk of neglect, decay or other threats and in time may allow the space to be used again as a store room, thus putting it to a viable use consistent with its preservation.

The Local Planning Framework lists as its core strategy “Conserving and enhancing the high quality of the natural and built environment. Sevenoaks has a legacy of high quality landscapes and historic features, which need to be protected and appropriately managed for future generations” Our plan to put in a trap door, promotes this element of the plan because it enables us to maintain the subterranean fabric of our listed property.

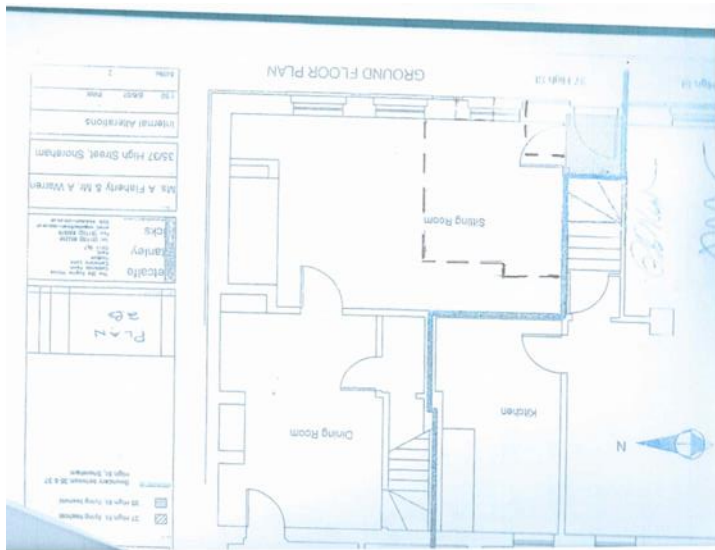


The location of the trap door within the new floor has been the focus of a long process of consideration. Accurate measurements and dimensions have been made by gaining access to the cellar through the ventilation grille. The original plans for the house, supplied to us at purchase, do not show the cellar as it actually is. It does not lie beneath the whole of our sitting room.

The cellar layout below shows the opening to the street at the top. The ledge features in the photo on page 4



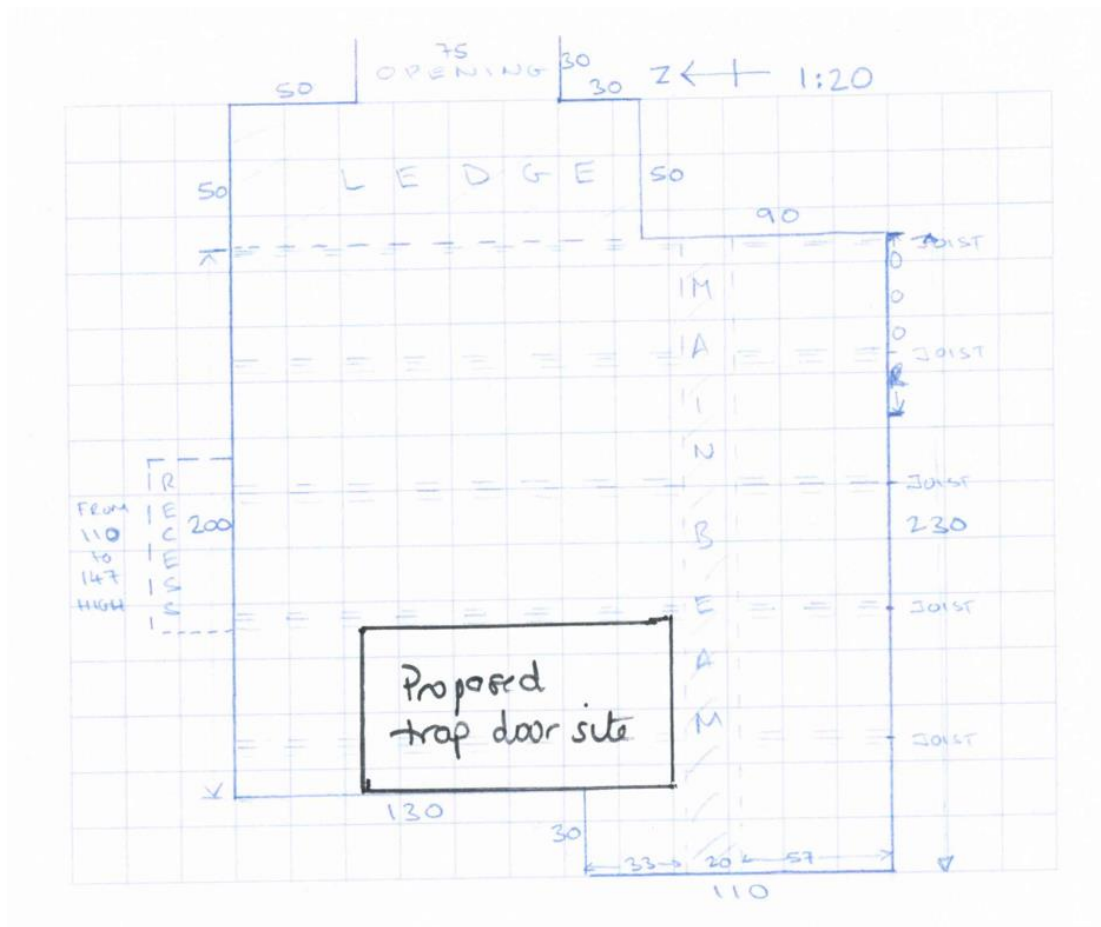
On the drawing below you can see how this cellar relates to the room above which we plan to put the new floor into. As is shown, the walls of the cellar do not correspond to those of the room above. This makes locating the trap door particularly challenging.



We propose to create the hatch as indicated on the plan below, so as to enable a second consent to be sought in future years to be able to run a staircase down to the floor along the wall edge. We have not begun to cost or design this and cash flow does not permit us to do so at present. We considered putting the trap door along the right hand edge of the room near the front door where the wall above and the wall below are consistently aligned. The beams of the cellar beneath however run to a main beam which limits the width of the hole to just under 57 cm which we think is a little narrow and locating it there would mean that furniture placed in the room above would have to be moved to access the hatch. The proposed site allows for a wider aperture, is not beneath furniture and only cuts one beam.

The dimensions of the hatch are so as to permit someone to descend a notional staircase without hitting their head on the edge of the hatch. This future proofs the health and safety aspects of harm to persons using the trap door. In the meantime and in the event of such a second consent not being forthcoming, it will allow a person to descend a ladder placed at a safe angle without hitting their head on the trap door.

In order to create the trap door it will be hinged so that it can be opened up to sit above the part of the floor where there is no cellar. This means that the weight of the opened trap door will not cause harm to the ceiling of the cellar. However the location of the trap door cannot be



completely discreet as the layout of the walls and space beneath our lounge do not correspond to the space above it. Although we are likely to continue to have a rug on the new floor, its location is unlikely to cover the trap door. We do not believe that it is possible to design a location which minimises harm to the structure and is totally discreet from view. We realise that we can only mitigate this, we cannot achieve both objectives given the very different layouts above and below. It is however the case that the current floor if uncovered is much more unsightly than a visible trap door in a beautiful floor.

The trap door itself would look like this, except in the wood finish indicated earlier on page 3. It would be 110cm long and 60 centimetres wide.



Access Considerations. In requesting this consent we have taken the view, and it has the in principle approval of the Conservation Officer, that we should enable access to the cellar of our property so that we can maintain it. We see the moment of upgrading and enhancing the floor as the time to do this work and we have confidence that the contractor appointed is a specialist with much listed building experience and that a high quality handcrafted product will be installed which respects the historical fabric of the building. The location of the hatch has evolved with our knowledge of the structure of the ceiling underneath. As we wish in the future to ensure access with a staircase installation we believe we have found the location that best enables the safe and potentially regular use of the access hatch.