

HERITAGE, DESIGN AND ACCESS REPORT

ST EDWARD'S HALL, THE SQUARE, STOW ON THE WOLD

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Prepared by:

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On behalf of the St Edward's Hall Trustees

1. HERITAGE

St Edward's Hall is the centrepiece of The Square in Stow on the Wold. It was erected in 1877-8 and the funds to build it came from unclaimed savings in the Provident Bank which had transferred its business to the Post Office Savings Bank in 1861. The Hall was managed by the Trustees as a complete building, including the handsome bell turret which was erected in 1892 to contain the fire alarm bell. In 1963 Gloucestershire County Council approached the Trustees to have a long term lease on the ground floor and as a result alterations were made to the building. The alterations which were carried out are shown on the original drawing which is attached as "St Edward's – S01".

This drawing clearly shows the existence of the stairs to the attic level and having removed these the present unsatisfactory pull-down loft ladder was installed. This has prevented any but the Trustees and maintenance personnel from using the attic floor since that time. It is a matter of record that the attic floor was habitable and used as a flat previously to 1963.

The Trustees now wish to bring the attic floor back into use and to this end a new staircase meeting modern Building Regulations has been designed complete with the retention of a single WC to augment the existing toilets on the first floor. The intention is to use the store room as a seminar room and in future years as funds become available so the spire room will be refurbished. This will enable a lot of the items which are currently in the store room hidden away to be on permanent display for the benefit of all. The collection includes Civil War and Stow artifacts.

2. DESIGN

As stated above the stairs are designed to meet modern Building Regulations and this design has been discussed and agreed with Cotswold District Council's Building Control Department. The staircase originally provided did not meet the requirements of the modern Regulations. The detailing and finish of the new stair will match the existing main stair.

3. ACCESS

The first floor of the Hall is currently served by two disabled person lifts giving access from the street level to the ground floor and then from the ground floor to the first floor. It is not envisaged that the lift will be extended to the attic floor because of the relatively few numbers who will be utilising that floor. Full disabled provision is made for the vast majority of the activities for which the hirers use the Hall floor. The new stairs are, however, as close to the ambulant disabled standard as can be made within the limitations of a Listed Building and in replacing an existing staircase.

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(Ref: Heritage Design and Access Statement – 25.11.21)