

# J.A.P. Architects

## DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Proposed Removal of Two Chimney Breasts**

**at**

**Hill House, Denston**

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This short design and access statement has been prepared in support of the listed building application to West Suffolk Council regarding a proposal to remove two chimney breasts at ground floor level at Hill House, Denston. This document is to be read in conjunction with the Historic Building Recording prepared by Barry Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND, the Schedule of Works, engineer's report and submitted drawings.

1.2 The application site is located in a secluded position, but roughly central to the very dispersed West Suffolk village of Denston. Although centrally located, the village at this point, gives the impression of being outside an established settlement boundary. The site is within the Denston Conservation Area.

1.3 The site measures approximately 1.6 hectares (4 acres) and has a frontage to Top Green: the only property to be located on the northside of Top Green. The house sits some 20 metres back from the highway.

1.4 The site is comprised of the principal dwelling of Hill House, a timber barn, and a small timber former stable block. The site is set within mature, hedgeline boundaries with a paddock to the north and east.

1.5 Hill House is Grade II listed. List entry 1031663.

*An early C19 timber-framed and plastered house. 2 storeys. 4 window range, double-hung sashes with glazing bars, in cased frames. A 4-panel door has an elliptical headed fanlight, fluted pilasters and a hood. The ground storey has 1 canted bay window. Roof slate, hipped.*

*All the listed buildings in Top Green form a group.*

1.6 In order to gain a fuller understanding of Hill House, as part of the site analysis and appraisal a Historic Building Report was commissioned. This has been prepared by Barry Hillman Crouch and is provided separately.

## 2.0 History of the Chimneys

2.1 The smaller of the two chimneys was built as part of the late C18th work and although today it impacts the modern-day kitchen, it would have served the living room. Indeed, some hollowness can be heard from the living room side through the boarding which is likely to have been in place at least three decades. The chimney has been blocked off and the external stack probably shortened. This may have occurred during the introduction of the dormer windows in the 1980s.

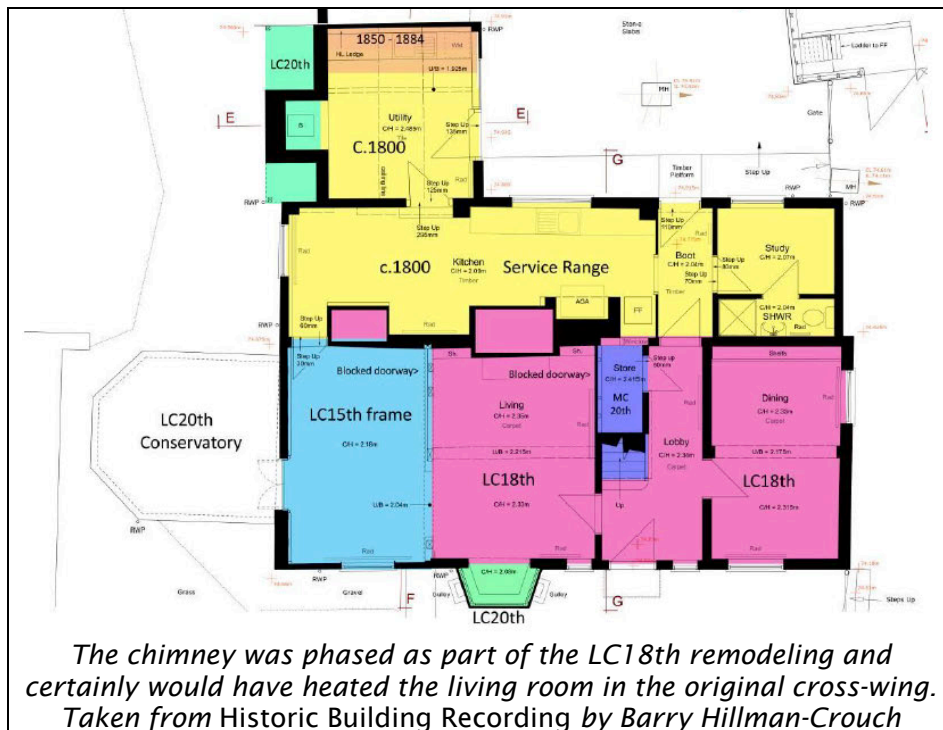
2.2 The “back” of this smaller chimney (facing today’s kitchen) is entirely solid and smooth so unlikely to have had an opening for the service room. It has a small sloped shoulder.

2.3 The chimney breast surrounding the Aga is a somewhat modern addition and flues into the large chimney stack which is to remain untouched.

2.4 There is no fireplace surround to either of the chimney breasts proposed for removal.



*Approximate position of former opening within what is now the living room.*



*The main fireplace. (To be retained.)*

### 3.0 Proposed Works

3.1 This proposal seeks permission for the removal of two areas of chimney breast in the kitchen only.

3.2 The extent of the proposed works has been the subject of considered discussions between applicant, architect, engineer, and heritage consultant. The proposal will have a negligible impact on the



*Sloped side of chimney above Aga chimney as it flues into main stack (to be retained).*

significance of the setting. It will, however, have a small impact internally on the heritage asset.



*Stepped shoulders to flank walls of chimneys inside the en suite (to be retained).*

3.3 The applicants recognise there is a delicate compromise to be had in order to retain the most interesting and historically sensitive fabric, rather than removing the entirety of these stacks and as such this proposal is only for the minimal removal of what is necessary to make a difference to the useable kitchen space.

3.4 No building fabric will be lost externally. The large chimney can be seen from the public realm and still functions and is in a good state of repair. The small chimney is dated to the early C18th and, as with much of the rear of the house, has been heavily modified in recent decades. The stack has not functioned for at least the last three decades. As part of future work the short chimney will be repointed. In a bid to only remove what is essential, this now-redundant stack will be kept as it has its part to play in the story of Hill House.



*Rear of chimney proposed for removal in the present-day kitchen.*

3.5 Internally, the parts of the chimneys that hold special interest are the two stepped areas at first floor in the en suite. They are both to remain. Understanding whether this was achievable with minimal loss of building fabric was critical in the proposal and the engineer's reports are included in the application.

3.6 The Aga chimney flues into the main stack at the sloped flank in the first floor bathroom. Although this section was initially suggested for removal, its charming character was deemed too great. Instead, a suitable engineering solution was found in order to retain this area.

3.7 The Aga surround is believed to be a modern addition so no loss of historic fabric will occur in that area. The chimney proposed for removal has been sealed and redundant for considerable time.



*Permission is sought of removal of part of the "Aga chimney" breast.*

## 4.0 Summary

4.1 The proposal is carefully considered in order to best protect as much of the fabric of the heritage asset as possible. The external stack will remain, as will the first floor stepped shoulders, ensuring the interesting points are retained and avoiding harmful impact.

4.2 The space created in the kitchen will enhance the usability and future viability of Hill House as a family home. The expected impact is perceived to be minimal and positive. Despite it including a small loss of building fabric at ground floor, the expected disturbance to the overall asset will enhance Hill House. There will be no change of relationship between buildings or altered scale. The proposal will not impact the Top Green area.

4.3 On this basis, we respectfully request that consent is granted for the proposal.



*The two chimneys as viewed externally. Both stacks will be retained.*