

Helmingham Hall Proposals

REVISION: P1

November 2022



Ben Pentreath

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Introduction

I.0 INTRODUCTION

The current house was built in the early 16th Century by Lionel Tollemache, High Sheriff of Suffolk and Norfolk. It was a substantial Tudor manor house, built around a central courtyard and surrounded by a moat. Since then, the building has been significantly remodelled three times. First in the mid-18th century by the 4th Earl of Dysart, again c.1800 by John Nash and finally by Anthony Salvin in the 1840s. In around 1900 the Tollemache family moved out of Helmingham, preferring to base themselves at their Cheshire Seat of Peckforton Castle, which was also built by Salvin. It was not until the 1950's that the family moved back into Helmingham. At this time, the hall was restored, wired for electricity and plumbing was added. The present Lord Tollemache commissioned David Mlinaric to restore and redecorate the formal rooms of the house whereas the North East wing has remained largely untouched since its utilitarian conversion in the 1950s.

I.1 BRIEF

We were approached in 2020 to look at restoring the old service wing of the house located in the north-east corner of the main house. Which, unlike the formal spaces and the first-floor bedrooms, had largely escaped modernisation. The kitchen and ancillary spaces received a utilitarian conversion in the 1950s with the addition of piecemeal plumbing and an oil Aga, but has not really been touched since. The family, who moved in with their young children a few years ago, have found that they now spend most of their time in one of the shabbiest and least cared for parts of the house and are keen to remedy this. Our brief therefore, was to make the kitchen suitable for 21st century life, to improve and tidy up the back hall and red passage and make better use of the pantry, larder, brush room and various stores. The family wished to make the kitchen lighter and more welcoming as well as improve its connection with the park and gardens. The service wing and kitchen need to function as a kitchen for the family but also be capable of catering for much larger parties as a key part of the estate's revenue is brought in by paying guests. This is a further reason to tidy up the entrance hall and create provision for a proper boot room, as space for this is currently lacking.

I.2 RESPONSE

As a practice, we pride ourselves on our sensitive approach to historic buildings and their evolution. We understand that the way we live now is often entirely different to the way that our predecessors lived in the same spaces. However, we believe that a few light-touch and careful interventions can often unlock these rooms, ensuring that they continue to be used and inhabited for generations to come. At the same time, it's important to try and mitigate any insensitive or modern interventions.

2.0 Proposals

2.1 SERVICES

Currently there is a convoluted system of surface-run pipes with a number of independent hot water cylinders and boilers scattered around the wing. Some of the wiring too, appears to date from the 1950s and will need replacing. We intend to rationalise the mechanical and electrical services in the service wing and consolidate the heating and hot water into a single location in a storeroom off the internal light well. We have an M&E consultant who specialises in re-servicing listed buildings doing a feasibility study.

2.2 GFI KITCHEN

North elevation - We propose opening up three blind windows internally. The windows are present on the exterior and have been blocked off internally at some point in the 20th century. We would also like to adapt one of the windows to form a door giving access from the kitchen onto the terrace. This would be done by carefully matching the historic window/door between the sitting room and small dining room on the east front.

East elevation - There is some damp along the floor line beneath the windows. We propose stripping off the plaster to investigate the cause of the damp and re-plastering in a breathable lime plaster.

South Elevation – The Aga currently projects out from the surround in an awkward way. We therefore propose adding a stone arched surround around the square opening where the Aga currently sits. This would allow the range to be contained within the reveal without disturbing the existing fabric. We would remove the boxed in boiler and surface run pipes and remove the modern laminate kitchen units. We would also remove the modern boiler cupboard to the right-hand side of the chimney breast and repair with lime plaster where necessary. New joinery would be largely freestanding, traditionally constructed and well detailed.

West Elevation – we propose carefully removing the plaster in the centre of the chimney breast to reveal the historic fire chamber. The fireplace would then be reinstated with a simple, flat early 18th century style chimneypiece in stone. The design is similar to the current fireplace in the small dining room.

The modern door to the larder would be replaced with a flush beaded or ledged and braced door to match the existing.

Floor – the current floor is a patchwork of materials including stone flags and clay pammments of various ages. Some of the pammments are badly spalling and need replacing. The floor is also very uneven. We would like to explore the option of relaying the floor using the existing coverings. This would allow replacement of any tiles that are badly damaged as well as allowing us to level the floor. Historic reclaimed 12 inch square clay pammments have been sourced from a local supplier to replace the broken tiles.

We also propose adding new free-standing cast iron radiators to this room to help heat the space and combat the damp issues to the external walls.

2.3 GF2 BOOT ROOM

Currently the house has no boot room and the family coats and boots are stored haphazardly along the back hall. The built-in cupboards that line this space contain the electrical meters and fuse boxes so there is almost no concealed storage remaining. We therefore propose making the covered porch between the sitting room and the kitchen into an enclosed boot room. This would entail adding a simple glazed screen door surface fixed to the rear of the existing brick arch. This would be carefully detailed with slender glazing bars. It would also be painted a dark colour and have a leaded glass transom light similar to the existing boot room door.

2.4 GF4 PREP KITCHEN

We propose re-fitting this room as a prep kitchen to support the main kitchen and for the use of caterers preparing for events.

The larder and prep kitchen were once a single space partially divided by a $\frac{3}{4}$ height wall behind the copper. This is suggested by the fact that the cornice runs through the wall between the two spaces. The location of the window which straddles the current dividing stud wall also seems to confirm this hypothesis. This window appears to be part of the Nash additions and would have overlooked the internal courtyard which was filled in by Salvin in the 1840's. The masonry wall behind the copper is still clearly visible on plan and elevation.

We would remove the old pipes and amalgam of random shelving and carefully strip the paint off and restore the brick floor.

We propose adding a connecting glazed door to link the prep kitchen to the larder. This door would be inserted into the stud wall in place of the modern plate glass window. The brick plinth along the west wall would be carefully removed and a new opening formed, to create a door to GF10. This new opening would link GF10 to the kitchen, thus incorporating what is currently an obsolete space into the main living area of the house. We also propose adding a free-standing cast iron radiator to this room.

2.5 GF5 LARDER

We intend to refit this space with traditionally detailed joinery, to make the most of the storage. We will add more open shelves on iron brackets to match the existing where needed. The eastern half of the floor is 20th century concrete whereas the west end retains the 19th century brick floor. We propose breaking out the concrete floor and patching in the brick floor to match the existing. We plan to reuse the reclaimed bricks salvaged from the GF4 plinth.

A new glazed screen with P1 restoration glass would be added in place of the 1950s sliding-door on the south elevation.

2.6 GF7 RED PASSAGE

This space has a concrete floor and suffers from severe damp along the south wall. We plan to mitigate the damp by removing the paint from the brickwork on the exterior of the south wall giving onto the light well, incorporating proper drainage in this area and stripping the gypsum plaster from the wall internally and replacing with lime plaster. The concrete floor would be removed and replaced with pavers or brick paviours to match existing in other adjacent rooms laid over a new limecrete slab with an under floor heating system to help combat the serious damp issues. At the west end the transom light over the door to the serving room has been boarded over. We proposed replacing this with a leaded glass transom light to match the boot room door.

2.7 GF10 GLASS HOUSE / YARD

This rather depressing yard is all that remains of Nash's much larger (approximately 9.5x13.5m) enclosed courtyard that is visible in Isaac Ware's map of 1803. This yard was filled in by Salvin as part of the 1840s works when he created two-storey range to connect the kitchen wing to the newly rebuilt north east corner.

We can see from the 1950s plan that this yard had a brick floor and small coal enclosure along the north wall. At some point during the second half of the 20th century a larger enclosure with a mono-pitch roof was added to the eastern half. This structure is of poor quality with an asphalt roof, on chipboard sheets and the wall is built in stretcher bond. The brick floor has been replaced with concrete, now in a poor state of repair. A flimsy partially glazed screen of 20th century construction divides the yard from GF08.

We propose removing the modern lean-to structure and repairing the brick pier of Nash's courtyard wall to the north, which it currently adjoins. We plan to remove the concrete floor and replace this with a reclaimed brick floor to match GF4 and GF8. On the north wall, we plan to add an identical casement window to balance the one lighting the Butler's pantry on the other side of the courtyard door. The Butler's pantry was probably added in the 1950s, as it doesn't appear in an old black and white photo of the house. Adding a new window in this location will create a more balanced composition externally as well as affording views into the park.

We would also propose enclosing the courtyard with a shallow glass lantern surrounded by a lead box gutter. This would sit beneath the crenellations of the parapet wall and as such would not be visible from the exterior. This space would be used to grow plants, herbs and fruit within easy access of the kitchen as the nearest part of the garden is beyond the moat.

A new glazed screen door is proposed in the arch between the glass house and GF8.

3.0 Existing Photographs



Kitchen facing east



Kitchen facing west



Proposed area for new boot room - view facing east across moat.



Proposed area for new boot room - view facing west



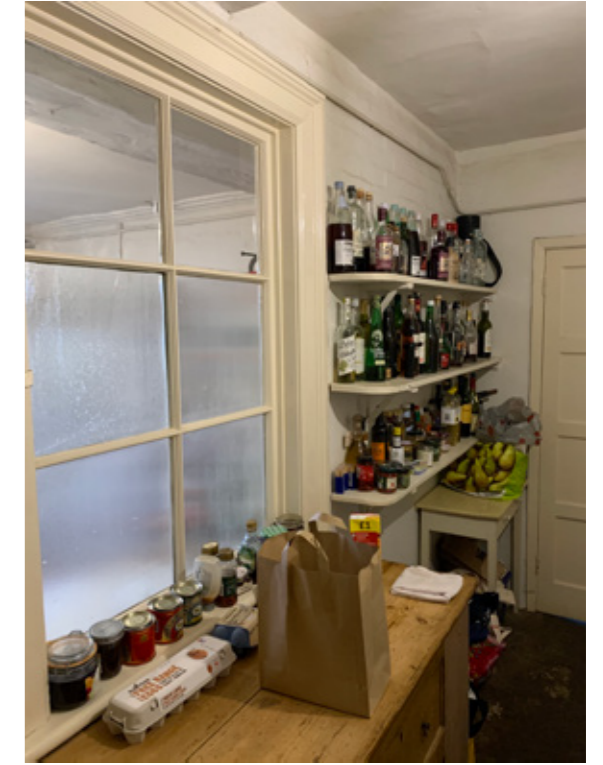
Prep Kitchen facing west



Historic copper in south-east corner of prep kitchen



Larder facing west.



Glazed partition between larder & prep kitchen



Red Passage in Salvin's rebuilt range. View facing west.



Red Passage facing east



Courtyard outer wall by Nash to the left, with Salvin's new range visible on the right and 20th century infill to the centre.




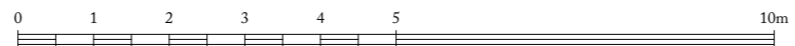
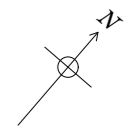
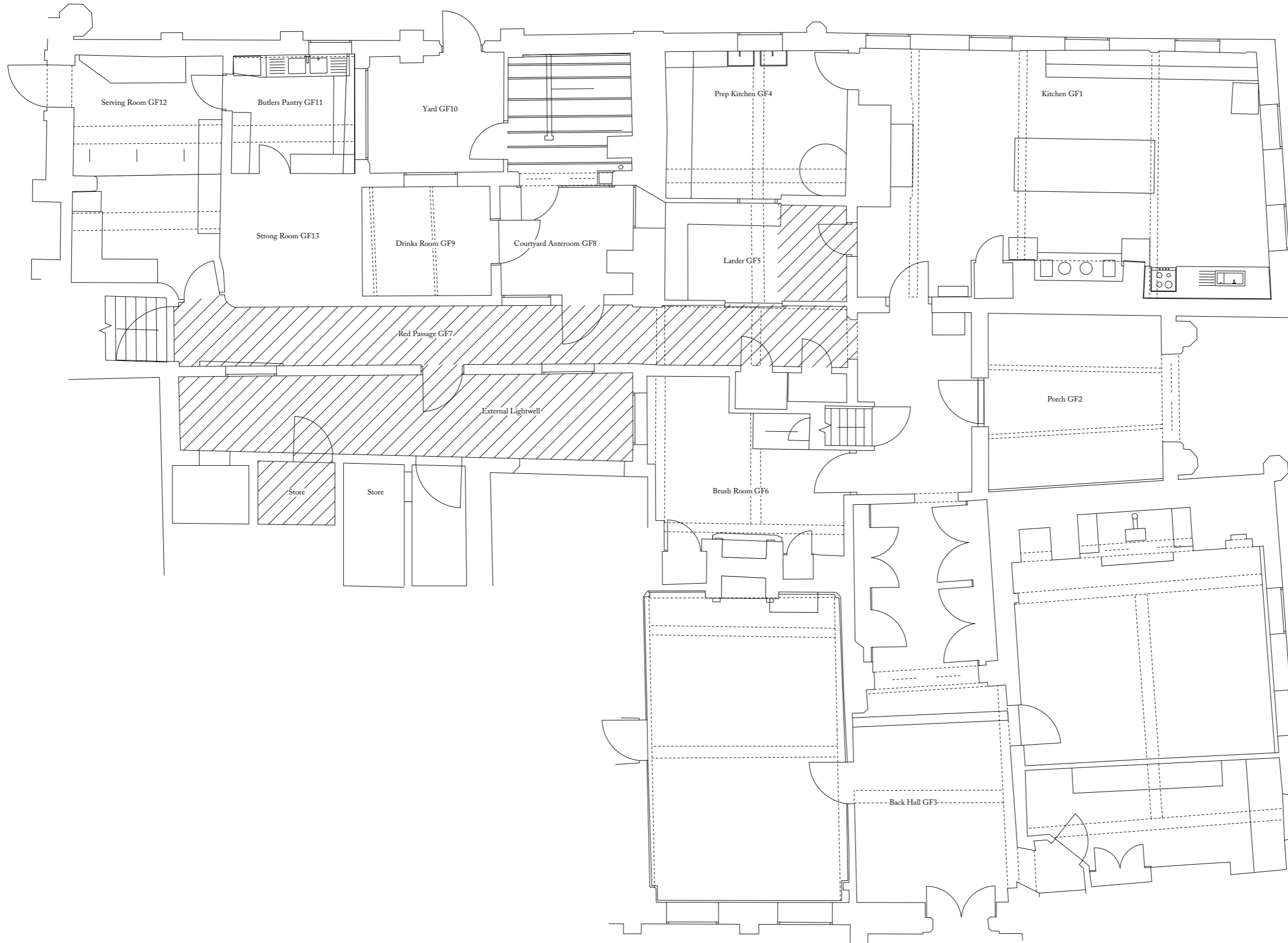
Arch from Salvin's remodelling once allowed access to external courtyard, now internal due to 20th century extension.



Access gate to the moat from the courtyard.

3.0 Existing Plan

 Hatch indicates areas of modern concrete flooring

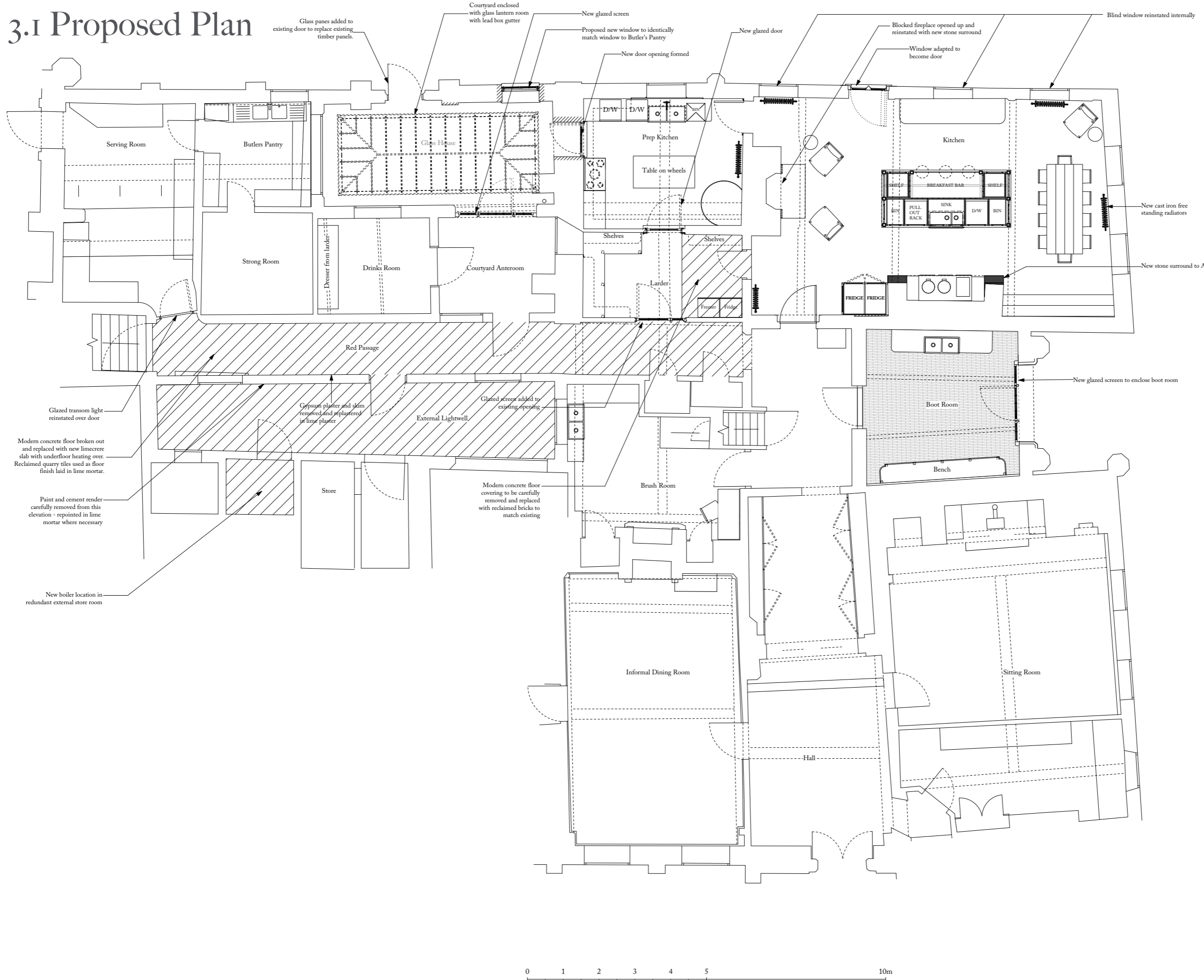



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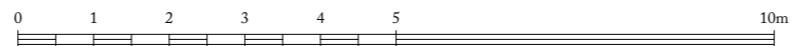
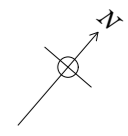
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| PROJECT: | HELMINGHAM HALL | |
| TITLE: | EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN | |
| DRAWING NO: S-100 | REV. NO: | P1 |
| SCALE: | 1:50@A1 1:100@A3 | DRAWN BY: AM |
| DATE: | 03.11.22 | CHECKED BY: RJC |

All dimensions to be checked on site.
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3.1 Proposed Plan



 Hatch indicates areas of modern concrete flooring to be carefully removed

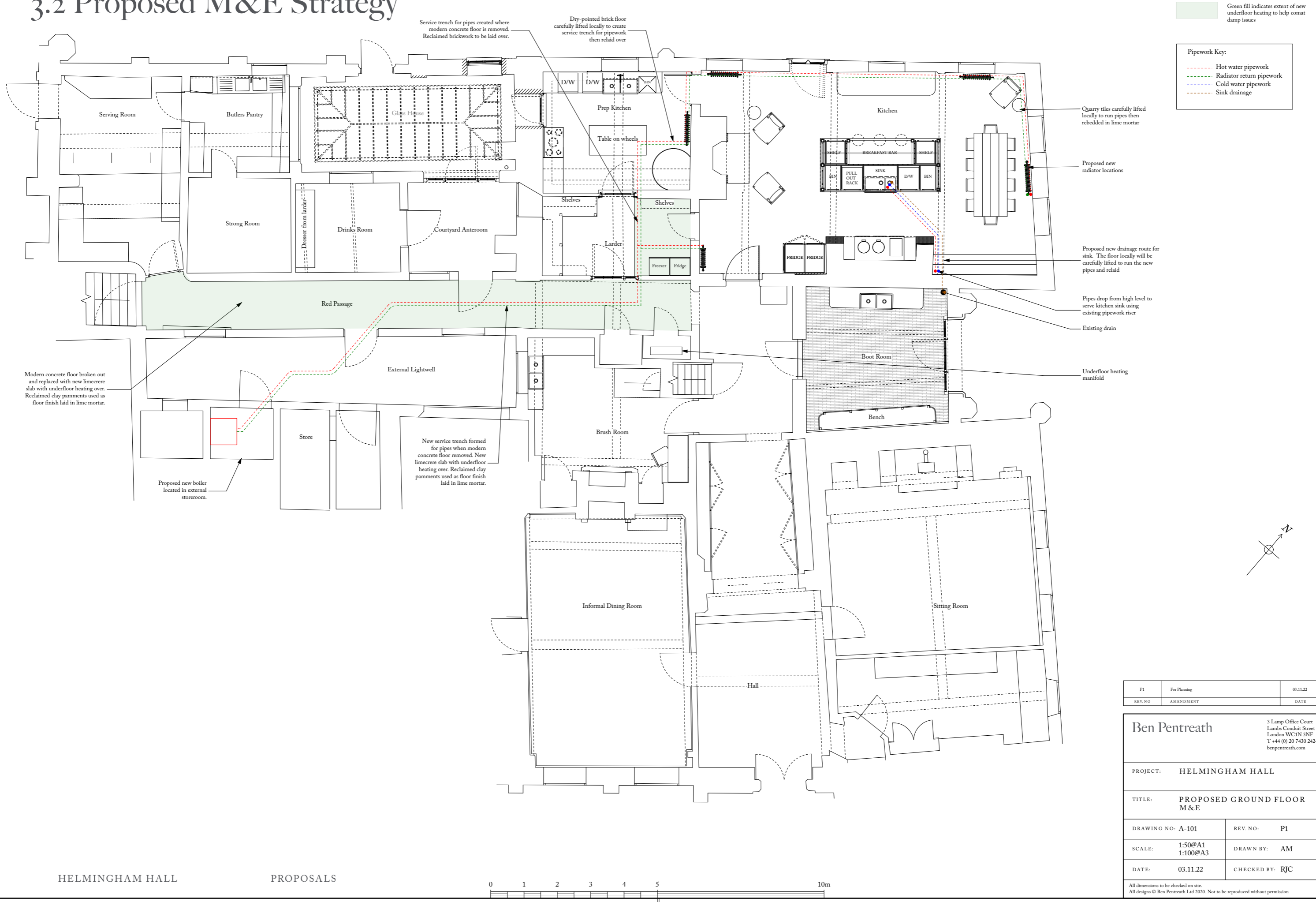


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| TITLE: | PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN | |
| DRAWING NO: A-100 | REV. NO: P1 | |
| SCALE: 1:50@A1 1:100@A3 | DRAWN BY: AM | |
| DATE: 03.11.22 | CHECKED BY: RJC | |

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3.2 Proposed M&E Strategy



Green fill indicates extent of new underfloor heating to help comat damp issues

Pipework Key:

- Hot water pipework
- Radiator return pipework
- Cold water pipework
- Sink drainage

Modern concrete floor broken out and replaced with new limecrete slab with underfloor heating over. Reclaimed clay pammments used as floor finish laid in lime mortar.

Proposed new boiler located in external storeroom.

New service trench formed for pipes when modern concrete floor removed. New limecrete slab with underfloor heating over. Reclaimed clay pammments used as floor finish laid in lime mortar.

Service trench for pipes created where modern concrete floor is removed. Reclaimed brickwork to be laid over.

Dry-pointed brick floor carefully lifted locally to create service trench for pipework then relaid over

Quarry tiles carefully lifted locally to run pipes then rebbeded in lime mortar

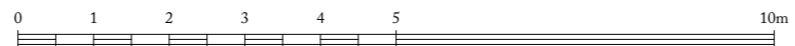
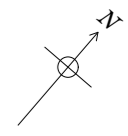
Proposed new radiator locations

Proposed new drainage route for sink. The floor locally will be carefully lifted to run the new pipes and relaid

Pipes drop from high level to serve kitchen sink using existing pipework riser

Existing drain

Underfloor heating manifold



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PROJECT: HELMINGHAM HALL

TITLE: PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR M&E

DRAWING NO: A-101 REV. NO: P1

SCALE: 1:50@A1 1:100@A3 DRAWN BY: AM

DATE: 03.11.22 CHECKED BY: RJC

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4.0 Proposed Visuals



A view toward the north front, demonstrating the discreet nature of the proposed kitchen window-door and glass house window, door and roof.



The proposed boot room glazed screen will appear completely recessive to the surrounding historic brickwork and arch.

5.0 Conclusion

5.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed works will restore areas of historic fabric and give the interior a much-needed refurbishment, that will ensure its survival as a family home for the next generation. We consider that the following aspects of the proposal, described in detail above, will enhance the heritage significance of Helmingham Hall and greatly improve the functionality as a family home.

- The renewing, consolidation and rationalisation of outdated mechanical and electrical services.
- The reopening of blocked historic windows to the north elevation of the kitchen.
- New traditional, well detailed joinery to replace modern, laminate kitchen units.
- Reinstatement of a lost fireplace to the west end of the kitchen.
- Repair & refurbishment of kitchen flooring.
- A dedicated area for boots and coats and general improvement to the existing covered porch area currently used for bin storage.
- Restoration of the brick floor to prep kitchen and larder areas.

- Improved connectivity and functionality between the main kitchen, prep kitchen and larder.
- The replacement of a 1950s sliding door to the larder with a traditionally detailed glazed screen and door.
- Severe damp along the external wall of the red passage to be addressed and rectified whilst repairing historic fabric.
- The modern concrete floor to the red passage to be replaced with traditional brick paviours or pavements to match existing elsewhere.
- Removal of a 20th century infill structure to the historic courtyard.
- Concrete flooring to the courtyard area to be replaced with reclaimed brick flooring.
- A glazed roof over the courtyard will greatly improve the flexibility and usability of the space, whilst remaining hidden behind the historic outer wall of the courtyard.

On balance, we believe that the positive impacts listed above outweigh any minor loss of historic fabric outlined in the proposals.