

# Helmingham Hall Design & Access Statement

REVISION: P1

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# Introduction

## I.01 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.

# Site

## 2.01 SITE

Helmingham Hall is situated at the heart of a 400 acre deer park 12 miles east of Stowmarket and 12 miles north of Ipswich. The park is partly bordered by Gosbeck Road and the B1077.

The Hall itself is surrounded on all four sides by a 60 foot wide moat, accessible via two working drawbridges. One bridge suitable for vehicles when parking in the central courtyard, the other for pedestrian use only.

Access to the park is either via Oak Walk, between the two gate lodges that flank the main drive, or a secondary access point to the north used for members of the public visiting the Hall gardens.

# Design 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 chimney-piece 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. 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 pavements 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 or 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.

# Historic England Enquiry

## 4.01 HISTORIC ENGLAND PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The below text is an excerpt from pre-application advice received 11th August 2022 from Lynette Fawkes, Inspector of Historic Building & Areas for Historic England. Please find the full correspondence supplied as a supporting document with this application.

“Thank you for your emails of 8th June 2022 and 10th August 2022 as well as the Teams call on 8th July 2022 to discuss the proposed alterations and extension to Helmingham Hall. These followed a site visit in June 2021 in which we viewed the areas subject to the pre-app advice in this letter.

It is very clear from the site visit that Helmingham is an important estate and house that has been subject to a number of alterations by important architects. It is an impressive building and sits within its moat. It is at the centre of an estate which serves as both a family home and garden as well as a family home and events business. As the family live in the Hall as well as run a business from it and out of it, it is important that family space and public space are demarcated.

The proposal seeks; a new door out to the patio by the family kitchen and a new window in the courtyard wall on the NW elevation, blind windows would also be opened on this elevation, a glazed screen and a the creation of a bootroom on the NE elevation. A glazed conservatory is proposed within the courtyard on the NW side of the house.

North west elevation (Excluding conservatory)

The opening up of blind windows, the conversion of one window to a door to match an existing door on the southern elevation and secondary glazing on the upper tier of windows would not, in principle, detrimentally alter the visual character of the building from this important public facing elevation. Although the conversion of a window to a door would result in some loss of historic fabric at the base of the door, this is considered to be minimal. The works are proposing to reuse the original window and existing mullions however, the section drawing shown seems to be showing double glazing and slightly thicker profile glazing bars. This needs to be reviewed as when compared with other windows in the run at this point, it could be noticeable. On the elevation drawings provided the lines are darker but this could just be drafting. Drawings for the ground floor windows should also be provided at application and we suggest that single glazing should be used.

The glazed screen and creation of a boot room – NE elevation  
This element of work has been the subject of a large amount of discussion. Although this portion of the building seems to be later, there is evidence that this entrance has seen a lot of use, the floor is charmingly worn through the impact of generations of feet. Earlier proposals showed the floor and walls covered over, it is now heartening to see the floor left as existing. The design of the screen has been designed to mimic that of the door behind and placing it on the inside of the arch means that the frame will be barely visible. Although this is placed within another popular public viewpoint, the amount of glass and the style of the door, which mimics other doors on other elevations, means that the visual harm would be minimal.

The glazed infill to the courtyard on the NW elevation  
This element has been the subject of much discussion. The courtyard was created probably by the Salvin alterations when he infilled part of Nash's much larger courtyard and forms part of the later history of the house. It is currently an under used and rather dingy spot. The proposed glazed space would add a small greenhouse for growing herbs used in the dining for events without having to go out into the gardens. It could also provide a small covered space for meetings and events in time. The proposed glazed infill would sit mostly behind the parapet and would only be visible slightly between the crenellations. This glazed design would need to be sleek and with minimal framing in order to minimise the visibility of the structure. The proposed new window would balance the symmetry of the elevation and would not be visually detracting from the character of the building.

#### Internal Changes

The internal changes would not result in harm to the significance of the building. The installation of underfloor heating has not been discussed at any length as these discussions were focussed in other areas and consideration will need to be given to whether this would raise the floor level and cause alterations to be required in other places. I would be happy to discuss this with you at another point if this would be useful.

#### Next Steps

Historic England are broadly supportive of the proposals presented in this pre-application submission. We consider that, subject to details and confirmation of the glazing in the new door to the kitchen your proposals could be ones to which we would not object.”

#### 4.02 DESIGN RESPONSE FOLLOWING PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Our proposal drawings and documents have been updated in response to the advice received from Historic England. We have also decided against the use of under-floor heating in the main kitchen to avoid the loss or damage of the historic clay pavement floor.

## Access

#### 5.01 ACCESS

Access is possible via one of two private access roads / driveways that run through the parkland to the Hall and outbuildings from the B1077. The Hall itself is surrounded on all four sides by a 60 foot wide moat, accessible via two working drawbridges. One bridge suitable for vehicles when parking in the central courtyard, the other for pedestrian use only. Existing access arrangements to the Hall remain unchanged in this application.