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DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

FOR AN ENSUITE SHOWER ROOM

AT

**MARTINS FARMHOUSE
HIGH STREET
WIDDINGTON
SAFFRON WALDEN
ESSEX
CB11 3SG**

NOVEMBER 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

Martins Farmhouse is a grade II listed, detached property located in the centre of the village of Widdington and is close to the public house- The Fleurs De Lys. The house sits parallel to the High Street and has a walled back garden. Behind the house there is a single storey garage with a drive and these provide the house with ample parking. There is an outbuilding to the south of the house (formerly a petrol station) which forms part of the property. The two properties behind the Farmhouse have access rights over the drive to their homes. Widdington is a thriving, desirable village with a public house and a good community building.

2. HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

The property is a two-storey detached house which is a Grade II listed property which has been extended in the past and is within the Conservation area of the village (see listed description in Section 3 below).

The house is believed to have 16th century origins, comprising a four-bay timber-framed structure typical of many traditional East Anglian buildings. However, by the mid 19th century the old farmhouse was apparently in a dilapidated state. In 1867 it was partially demolished and rebuilt as a shop, dwelling and place for storing grain. At this time the building's oak frame was clad in its current brick exterior. A stone in the west facing wall is inscribed, "Rebuilt in 1867 FS" in reference to the then owner Francis Smith. The current large bay window was added to the front of the property, this being used as a shop window and doorway.

Sometime after 1891 the artist Sir George Clausen RA (1852 – 1944) rented the first floor of the property and used it as a studio. He stripped out the ceiling, exposing the rafters and beams and installed the large north-facing window that is still in existence. A first-floor door gave access to the studio, presumably via an external staircase.

In the 20th century the building was used as a farmhouse and dwelling and two extensions were built to the rear of the property. The current garage next the property was Martins Petrol Station and the single storey 19th century extension to the south of the main building was used as an office where customers paid for their petrol.

In 1999 the farmyard to the rear of the property was divided between Martins Farm, Roseley Barn and Meadow Cottage.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1 Martins Farm - post 1867



Figure 2 Martins Farm - post 1867

3. LISTED DESCRIPTION

WIDDINGTON HIGH STREET 1. 5222 (east side) Martins Farmhouse TL 5331 42/1482

2. Mid C19 gault brick house with a wing extending to the east at the north end and a wing extending to the west at the south end. The brick work is patterned with red brick and a band extends on the front between the storeys. Two storeys and attics. The windows are double-hung sashes with glazing bars, in plain reveals. The wing to the west has a modern bay on the ground storey. Roofs tiled. Included for group value.

Listing NGR: TL5384931574

4. DESIGN

PROPOSED WORKS

The proposal is as follows:

-Form a new ensuite shower room in the corner of bedroom 2. Approval has already been obtained to remove the modern cupboard adjacent to the chimney in the bedroom. A new soil vent pipe (SVP) will be required to take the waste water away and the room will need a mechanical extract.

APPEARANCE

The only external changes to the listed building will be the addition of a SVP either internally located or externally located and an extract fan on the Rear/East elevation or as an eaves vent.

5. JUSTIFICATION/SIGNIFICANCE

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE & CONSULTATION

Pre-application advice has not been sought for this project as the alterations are minor works.

A previous Listed building application was submitted in 2022 Ref. UTT/22/2513/LB. Approval was obtained to Remove the modern cupboard to expose the chimney in bedroom 2 and to Increase the height of the existing internal partitions of bedroom 1.

The item to add a rooflight on the rear sloping roof and to add the ensuite were withdrawn from the application as the conservation officer suggested there was insufficient justification for these two items. The applicant no longer wants to add the rooflight but they do want to gain approval for the ensuite shower room.

The existing owners have lived at Martins Farmhouse for many years and have loved their time in this listed building. They have regularly spent money repairing and maintaining the fabric of the building.

In 2022 the current owners decided it was time to move to a more modern house in the local town as they are nearing retirement age and are finding the steep staircases more difficult to manage. When they retire, they will also have a smaller income and will have less to spend on maintaining the house.

The house was on the market for many months, but all the people who viewed the house made the same comment that one of the bedrooms needed an ensuite shower room and that without it, they were not interested. No sale was forthcoming and the owners took the house off the market.

Having obtained permission to increase the height of the bedroom 1 partitions, the owners had this work done, and then put the house back on the market in 2023.

Without there being an ensuite shower room off one of the bedrooms, they got the same comments from potential buyers and still have had no offers.

In addition to the comments from buyers, the owner has also fallen down the stair next to the dining room and broken his ankle. He is currently on crutches and has greatly reduced mobility.

Therefore, the owners really want to gain approval for an ensuite shower room, so they can sell their lovely listed building and move to a house that suits the needs of an older couple.

NEW SOIL VENT PIPE (SVP) AND MECHANICAL EXTRACT

The owners are willing to locate the new SVP either internally or externally- whichever is the option that the conservation officer considers is the best for the building. If the SVP is internal, it will be located in the corner of the shower room, inside the historic timber frame ensuring that no structural timbers will be cut. The SVP is 100mm in diameter so a hole this size will be required to go through the first-floor to the ground floor and through the ground floor. On the ground floor the SVP will be in the corner of a store cupboard and therefore cannot be seen.

The floor boards on the first floor appear to be Victorian and were previously altered to allow a waste pipe to feed through to the floor below, when a basin was added in bedroom 2. The basin is no longer in the bedroom and the floorboards have been patched up (see the site photos). The floor boards on the ground floor were replaced with reclaimed floorboards under the approval of a previous listed building application a few years ago and are not original historic fabric.

To add the SVP internally there will be minimal disturbance to the building fabric and NO historic structural timbers will be cut.

If the SVP is located externally, it will be visible on the back of the house and less attractive but if this is the preferred option the owners will comply. To add the pipe externally, a 100mm diameter hole will have to be cut through the external wall from the wc to the SVP. Similarly, the disturbance to the building fabric is minimal- one 100mm diameter hole.

For the mechanical extract, either a through the wall extract can be fitted or a ceiling extract that is ducted to the eaves can be fitted.

For the through the wall extract a 75mm diameter hole will need to be cut through the external wall for the extract and will have a vent cover over the hole.

If the extract is in the ceiling a 75mm hole will be needed in the plastered ceiling and then a duct fitted between the rafters to the soffit at the eaves. A vent cover will be fitted in the soffit board. This option is probably preferable, as it is less visible on the outside of the building, but the client will comply with whichever option the conservation officer prefers.

SIGNIFICANCE

What heritage assets and settings will be affected by the proposals?

The only heritage asset affected by this proposal will be the subject property. The house is detached and has a good size garden all around the house. The proposed ensuite shower room is internal and cannot be seen by anyone else.

What is the significance of the assets and settings affected?

This house is a grade II listed building in the beautiful village of Widdington. We understand that this is a special building of historical importance and would not attempt to change the primary elevation on the High Street or change the original fabric of this timber framed house. We are proposing to alter the building in minor ways to provide a shower room in the corner of bedroom 2, to enable the careful owners to sell the property to a younger generation.

The owners appreciate the historic detailing, the character and the style of the existing house and want to ensure that any alterations are in keeping with the house.

What will be the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets and settings affected?

The impact of the proposal is that a small area of first-floor and ground floor or external wall (100mm diameter maximum) will be removed to allow for the SVP or mechanical extract to be fitted. The owners will locate the new SVP and mechanical extract in the position preferred by the conservation officer to gain an approval. Photographs of the corner of bedroom 2, bedroom 2 floorboards and the store below on the ground floor are included in the site photos, which are part of this application.

6. ACCESS

Access into the site and the house will remain as existing.

7. CONCLUSION

We have been through a thorough process to check that the alterations will have a minimal impact on the listed building. We have considered the significance of the heritage asset and designed the alterations sympathetically. We have ensured that the principal elevations of the listed building are unaffected by the proposals and that no other heritage asset is affected. We know the proposal will enhance the house and will make it saleable. The ensuite shower room will provide the accommodation that future owners require and these new owners will be the people who will maintain this historic building for future generations to enjoy.