

1 THE CLOSE, HARDWICK, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



JPHERITAGE

November 2023

PROJECT: 1 The Close, Hardwick, Buckinghamshire

DOCUMENT TITLE: Heritage Assessment

CLIENT: Mr and Mrs Johnston

PREPARED BY: Jamie Preston, Heritage Consultant
JPHERITAGE
Worting House
Church Lane
Basingstoke
Hampshire

Mob: 07974 671840
Email: jamie.jpheritage@gmail.com

SITE VISIT: 23rd August 2022

REPORT ISSUED: 3rd October, 31st October and 13th November 2022 and 24th November 2023

JPH PROJECT NO: 23/062

© JP Heritage Ltd 2023 No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort has been made to provide as complete and as accurate a report as possible. However, JP Heritage Ltd cannot accept any liability in respect of, or resulting from errors, inaccuracies, or omissions contained in this document.

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	POLICY CONTEXT	
2.1	NPPF	5
2.3	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan	6
3.0	THE HERITAGE ASSET AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE	
3.1	Understanding the history of the heritage asset	6
3.2	Understanding the form of the heritage asset	8
3.3	Assessment of the significance of the heritage asset	19
4.0	HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	20
5.0	CONCLUSIONS	23

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 THE CLOSE, HARDWICK - HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by JP Heritage Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Johnston to inform the potential for an extension and alterations at 1 The Close, Hardwick. 1 The Close is a Grade II listed building located within the Hardwick Conservation Area.
- 1.1.2 The document provides an outline description of the historic development and significance of the listed building and assesses the impacts of the proposed scheme. This has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the LPA in accordance with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Revised 2023).

1.2 Nature of the proposals

- 1.2.1 The proposed scheme is for a rear extension, including a stair turret and associated alterations, and internal alterations.

1.3 Heritage designations



Figure 1: Front elevation of 1-2 The Close

- 1.3.1 1, 2 and 3 The Close were added to the statutory *List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II on 21st December 1967. The listing was amended on 29th January 1985. The list description reads as follows:

3 cottages, formerly house. Early C17, the rear wing mostly rebuilt C19. Timber frame with herringbone brick infill and plinth of rubble stone, brick and render. Rear wing of red brick. Old tile roof, square central chimney of thin brick with pilasters to sides. T-plan. 2 storeys, 2 bays and central lobby entry to S.W. Barred wooden casements 3-light to left bay and to first floor right, single light to ground floor right, 2-light to centre of first floor. Board doors to centre and right. Small weatherboard outbuilding with hipped thatch roof to left. Interior has stop-chamfered spine beams, that in left room moulded, and stone fireplace with 4-centred arch and ornamental overmantel in upper left room. RCHM II p.142-3 Mon.9

- 1.3.3 1 The Close is located within the Hardwick Conservation Area.

1.4 References in the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (Heritage Gateway)

1.4.1 The Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record does not include any information in addition to the listing description for 1 The Close.

1.5 Planning history

1.5.1 The relevant planning history 1 The Close is as follows:

15/03147/ALB – Re-building of lean-to roof structure (Approved).

85/00246/AV – Alterations to convert barn into living accommodation (Approved).

87/00419/ALB – Re-open previously bricked up 2nd storey window opening to gable end (Approved).

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 NPPF (Revised 2023)

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It advises that in determining planning applications *'local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance* (paragraph 194).

2.1.2 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as being *'a building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.'* Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets.

2.1.3 In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of (paragraph 197):

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.1.4 Specific guidance on the treatment of designated heritage assets (listed buildings) emphasises the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset in order to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 199). It advises that *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

2.1.5 Paragraph 200 continues by stating that ‘any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification’.

2.2 Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (adopted January 2004)

2.2.1 None of the historic environment policies relevant to this application have been saved.

2.3 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Proposed Submission 2013-33 (November 2017)

2.3.1 The VALP Proposed Submission has been submitted to the government and will be subject to a public examination. The following policy is relevant to the proposed development: BE1 – Heritage Assets.

2.3.2 With regards to listed buildings, this policy states the following:

Proposals for development shall contribute to heritage values and local distinctiveness. Where a development proposals is likely to affect a designated heritage asset and or its setting, the significance of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposals must be fully assessed and supported in the submission of an application.

3.0 THE HERITAGE ASSET AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Understanding the history of the heritage asset

3.1.1 1-2 The Close originated as a single dwelling with a lobby entry plan. The building was historically in the ownership of Manor Farm and was converted to farm workers cottages, probably in the 19th century. The 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1880) shows 1-3 The Close apparently subdivided so that the central cottage included the rear wing. 1 The Close is the smaller cottage. 1 The Close is positioned along the edge of the map sheet and the details on the stitched mapping at figure 2 is missing some information. A detail of 1 The Close shown at figure 3 suggests that the outbuilding on the north-west side broke forward slightly from the original house. 1-3 The Close is shown within a garden with an outbuilding to the rear of 1 The Close and a path along the south-east side of the rear wing (3 The Close).

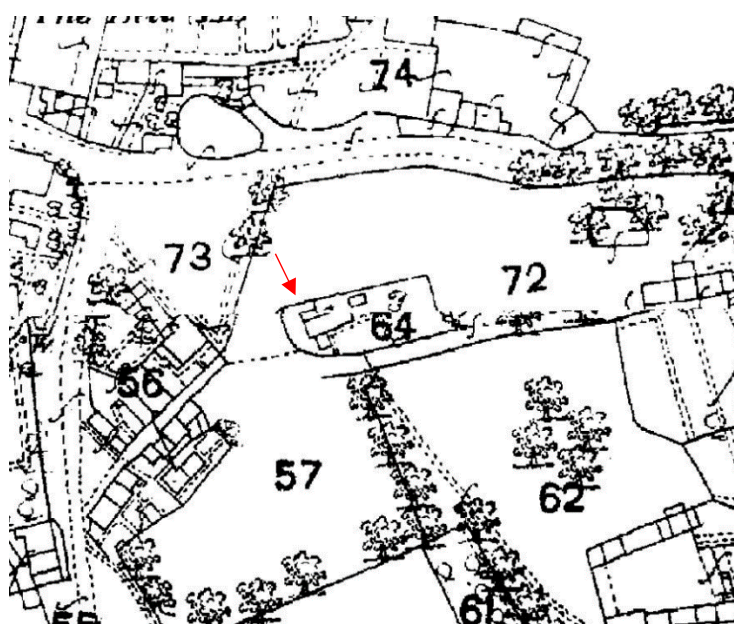


Figure 2: Extract from the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1880)



Figure 3: Extract from the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1880) showing 1 The Close

- 3.1.2 The 2nd edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1899) shows that the outbuilding on the north-west side of 1 The Close was in line with the front of the house. This suggests a drafting error on the 1st edition map or perhaps that there was a small projecting element on the south-west side of the outbuilding in 1880. Otherwise, there are no apparent changes shown to the footprint of 1 The Close. The freestanding outbuilding to the rear had been demolished by this time.

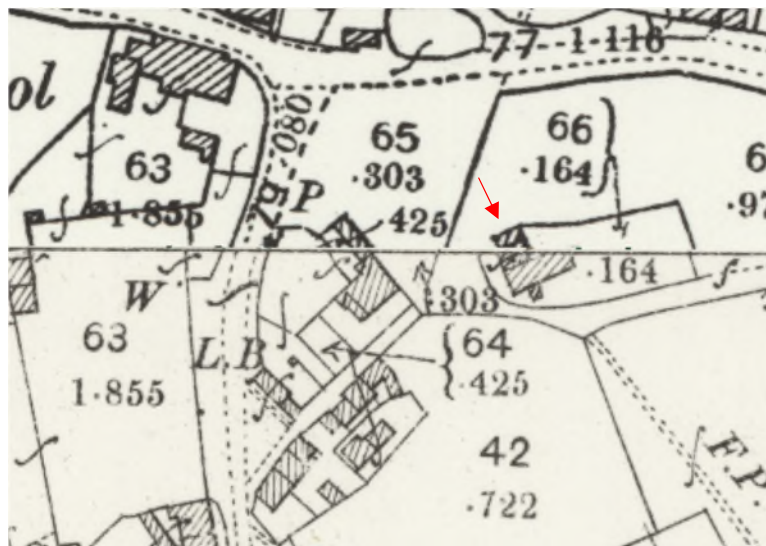


Figure 4: Extract from the 2nd edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1899)

- 3.1.3 A photograph of 1-2 The Close in c. 1919 shows how little the front elevation has changed since the early 20th century. The outbuilding did not have a front window at this time and the chimney stack has been repaired and raised on the 1 The Close side. Otherwise, the pattern of openings remains apparently unaltered.



Figure 5: 1-2 The Close in c. 1919

3.2 Understanding the form of the heritage asset (see figure 5 for a suggested phase plan)

Overview

3.2.1 1 The Close is one half of a 2-unit house (with 2 The Close) dating from the early 17th century (Phase 1). Part of the rear wing (3 The Close) lies within the ground floor bathroom of 1 The Close and, based on the character of the timber posts and brick panels, dates from the 17th century. This wing was apparently largely rebuilt in the 19th century. The single storey extension on the north-west side of the listed building appears to have been built in the 18th to 19th centuries (Phase 3). The roof was rebuilt in 2015. Phase 4 is the single storey brick extension to the rear.



Figure 6: Suggested ground floor phase plan

Phase 1

3.2.2 As stated above, the Phase 1 house is one half of a 2-unit house dating from the early 17th century. The position of the door in line with the axial stack suggests a lobby entry plan and 1 The Close therefore includes the original entrance to the 17th century house. The timber frame is characterised by two mid rails or side girts interrupted by principal and intermediate posts and with studs that form the panels for the herringbone brickwork. The externally visible north-west gable end is characterised by a queen strut (3) truss with clasped purlins. Internal details for the north-west gable end include evidence for wide ground and first floor windows. The sill or base plate for an oriel survives internally within the Phase 2 extension. The timber frame lies over a stone plinth. The central brick stack includes narrow bricks. The rear elevation has been refronted in brick, probably in the 19th century, probably the latter.



Figure 7: Original entrance to the Phase 1 house



Figure 8: Queen strut truss with clasped purlins on the north-west elevation



Figure 9: First floor window opening on the original north-west elevation viewed from the roof void over the dining room



Figure 10: Sill for an oriel window on the original north-west elevation viewed from the dining room



Figure 11: Rear elevation of the Phase 1 house

3.2.3 The ground floor would originally have been a single room. The inserted partition includes a timber stud and rail which could be of 18th to early 19th century date and possibly associated

with the conversion of the original house to cottages. Given the depth of the area between the rear of the chimney breast and the rear wall, it is likely that the original stair was in this location. Based on the existing plan of the ground floor this would have been located within the corner of the existing bathroom. This is to the rear of where the current stair is positioned. The current stairs appear to be of 20th century date. The party wall includes a projecting element with a slender timber rail which possibly indicates an infilled door opening.



Figure 12: Timber framed partition subdividing the original ground floor room



Figure 13: Likely position of the original stairs to the rear of the existing stairs



Figure 14: Possible blocked opening between 1 and 2 The Close (bathroom)

- 3.2.4 The ground floor includes a stone backed fireplace with a chamfered timber lintel with runout stops, seats on each side and a bread oven. The off-centre position of the axial beam is explained by the inserted partition. This beam would originally have been located centrally in the original room layout. The axial beam includes ovolo mouldings which are typical of late 16th to early 17th century style. The width of the joists on the ground floor (90-100mm) and the apparent soffit tenon joints are consistent with a 17th century date. Part of the northwest wall of Phase 1 has been removed in the current kitchen. The girding beam remains in place and includes mortices along the soffit for studs. There are changes in level from the entrance lobby into the lounge and into the kitchen. This suggests that the floors to the entrance and lounge have been raised.



Figure 15: Fireplace with timber lintel in the lounge



Figure 16: Axial beam with ovolo mouldings in the lounge



Figure 17: Cross beam with mortices along the soffit demonstrating a removed section of timber frame and stone plinth

- 3.2.5 The first floor would originally have been a single room with possibly a stair and landing to the rear of the chimney breast and perhaps a cupboard on the right hand side of the chimney breast. There is a hint of a chamfer on the tie beam on the south-east side of the stairs and a recessed section of wall that may indicate a door through to 2 The Close. The partition that defines the two bedrooms on the north-west side of the first floor is along the line of an axial beam. This beam includes 2 ½" chamfers and scroll stops which is consistent with an early 17th century date. This confirms a ceiling on this side of the building from an early date, if not originally. The timber frame is expressed on the first floor and includes straight head braces and posts with splay cut jowls.



Figure 18: Possible door between Nos. 1 and 2



Figure 19: Chimney breast with cupboard to the right in the main bedroom on the first floor



Figure 20: Detail of the chamfered beam with scroll stops on the first floor



Figure 21: Later partition subdividing the first floor space and timber framing with straight head braces

- 3.2.6 There is a mezzanine floor accessed by a ladder stair. The presence of stave holes for a wattle and daub panel along the soffit of the tie beam where the attic bedroom is accessed demonstrates that the original house did not include a habitable space at this level. The presence of old iron pintles shows that a door had been inserted in this position historically, possibly when the Phase 1 house was converted to cottages. The queen strut trusses of the gable end bay and of the chimney bay are expressed along with clasped purlins. An interesting detail is the curved windbraces which generally fall out of use by the end of the 16th century.



Figure 22: Ladder stair to the attic spaces



Figure 23: Stave holes for a wattle and daub panel over the door to the attic bedroom



Figure 24: Iron pintles for a door into the attic space



Figure 25: Curved windbrace in the attic bedroom

Phase 2

- 3.2.7 Phase 2 is a small section within the ground floor bathroom that projects into the rear wing (3 The Close). There is a section of timber, possibly a timber door lintel, over the sink.



Figure 26: Recess in the bathroom that projects into the Phase 2 wing

Phase 3

- 3.2.8 Phase 3 is lean-to extension on the north-west side of the house. This is likely to have been an outbuilding accessed separately from the house. This is a weatherboard clad structure with a thatched roof. The roof was replaced in 2015. The weatherboard cladding is a later replacement and the plinth includes a cement render finish. The interior has a plaster finish and floorboards at a higher level than the kitchen. This extension appears on late 19th century maps and was probably built during the 19th century or possibly in the late 18th century.



Figure 27: Front elevation of Phase 3



Figure 28: Rear elevation of Phase 3

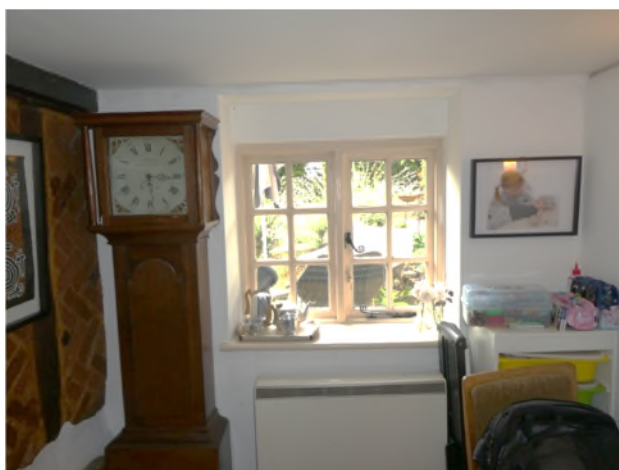


Figure 29: Dining room



Figure 30: Replacement roof

Phase 4

- 3.2.9 Phase 4 is a single storey lean-to extension with stretcher bond facing brickwork. The character of the brickwork suggests a second half of the 20th century date for construction.



Figure 31: 20th century lean-to extension

3.3 Assessment of the significance of the heritage asset

Phase 1

- 3.3.1 1 The Close is part of a 2-unit lobby entry house that was constructed in the early 17th century. The timber frame survives relatively intact on the front and side elevations and the herringbone brickwork is indicative of early brick infill. The ground and first floors have been subdivided but the original proportions of these spaces is preserved by the timber frame and axial beams. The style of the axial beams and sizes of the floor joists are consistent with an early 17th century date. The queen strut (3) roof structure with curved windbraces are typical forms of roof construction in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The fireplace on the ground floor includes a timber lintel, seats and a bread oven. The chimney stack demonstrates that the chimney served back to back fireplaces on the ground floor (Nos. 1 and 2). The listing description suggests that there is a stone fireplace on the first floor of No. 1. This has been blocked up. The original stair has been removed but is likely to have occupied the space to the rear of the chimney breast.
- 3.3.2 The timber-framed structure, herringbone brick nogging, historic floor plan (lobby entry), fixtures and fittings that include axial beams, joists, fireplace with a timber lintel and bread oven, and evidence for an oriel window all contribute to the significance of the listed building.

Phase 2

- 3.3.3 Phase 2 is a small projection into the rear wing of the listed building (3 The Close). There is a horizontal timber that may be a timber lintel for a door but this is unclear. Phase 2, i.e. 3 The Close, is an important component of the historic development of the listed building but the element of this phase at 1 The Close appears relate to a much later alteration and appears to be of limited interest.

Phase 3

- 3.3.4 Phase 3 is an apparently timber framed outbuilding with weatherboard cladding and a hipped roof finished with thatch. This addition had been constructed by the 19th century and possibly

dates from the 18th century. The overall historic form of Phase 3 remains relatively intact but it has been much altered as a result of a replacement roof (2015) and timber cladding, the insertion of window openings, alterations to the plinth which include a cement render finish and the insertion of a ceiling. In terms of its form, Phase 3 makes a positive contribution to the character of the listed building. In terms of historic fabric, Phase 3 is of relatively low significance.

Phase 4

3.3.5 Phase 4 is a modern brick extension of no heritage interest.

4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Proposals

4.1.1 The proposals are for the following:

- Rear extension;
- Repositioning of stairs;
- Ground floor alterations;
- First floor alterations.

4.2 Rear extension

4.2.1 Comparison of historic maps with the layout of the garden of 1 The Close today shows that the rear garden has contracted substantially and is now a small courtyard like space. The main area of garden is at the front of the property. The relatively spacious front garden appears to retain its historic layout/boundaries and affords an appreciation of the listed building from The Close. The front garden contributes positively to the setting of 1 The Close. By contrast the rear garden is characterised by modern boundaries and includes a modern house close to the north-west boundary. The partly rebuilt rear wing (3 The Close) is visible from within the rear garden but is partly masked by modern boundaries and a second half of the 20th century brick lean-to extension. The rear garden does not make a particularly positive contribution to the listed building in terms of setting. This space does allow the late 18th to 19th century brickwork of the rear elevation to be appreciated.

4.2.2 With the above in mind, the proposed single storey rear extension has been designed to have a low profile and a high level of permeability so that the rear elevation of the listed building remains legible. The design includes a flat roof and predominantly full height glazing, both of which would afford a continued appreciation of the rear aspect of the listed building (**figures 11 and 28**). Although proposed for use as a kitchen, the proposed extension would have a contemporary garden room type appearance that would be in keeping with the rear aspect of the house.

4.2.3 Associated alterations include the removal of the 20th century window on the rear elevation of the Phase 1 house. This window is within an enlarged opening and is of no interest. The original width of the window opening is preserved by the segmental arched head, which would be retained. Access into the proposed extension would be formed by removing the window and dropping the sill of the window opening on the rear elevation of Phase 3 (**figure 28**). The window is of 20th century date and of negligible heritage value. The plinth wall would be cut but this has been much altered with a cement render and damp proof injection and, as a result, is considered to be of low heritage value.



Figure 32: 20th century window in an enlarged opening on the rear elevation of Phase 1

4.3 Repositioning of stairs

- 4.3.1 The existing stair from ground to first floor includes a 20th century banister on the landing. The character of the stair construction is currently unknown but is not considered to be original. The position of the stairs may relate to the conversion of the original building to cottages.
- 4.3.2 Based on comparative house plans for 2-unit, lobby entry houses of the early 17th century, it is likely that the original stairs would have been in the general location of the current stairs, i.e. to the rear of the chimney breast. The form of the original stairs is currently unknown but they were generally winder or newel stairs in the 17th century. This form of stair is more economical in terms of space.
- 4.3.3 A number of options have been considered for a new stair position, including a more central location, i.e. in the lobby area between the kitchen and bathroom and within the space to the rear of the chimney breast (current bathroom). The former option was considered inappropriate as it would impact on historic joists and the latter option was ruled out due to unknown impacts on joists in this area and also that it would not achieve the objective of a first floor bathroom.
- 4.3.4 This element of the proposals seeks to build on the footprint of the existing mid-20th century rear extension to create a stair turret type extension. The existing rear lean-to is of modern date and does not contribute positively to the character and significance of the listed building. The proposed stair turret would be reminiscent of 17th and 18th century arrangements for staircases and is considered to be a sympathetic approach visually. There would be some loss historic wall fabric, i.e. brickwork relating to 19th century alterations to the building. The principal post and wall plate in this position would not be impacted. The wall plate is visible externally and shows the position of former studs in the form of peg holes. The projection of the wall plate and the position of the peg holes demonstrate that original studs were replaced with brick in the 19th century.



Figure 33: Externally visible wall plate

- 4.3.5 This element of the proposals would require the removal of a casement window. This window is part mid-20th century and part modern replacement and of negligible heritage value. It is proposed to insert a new window opening on the right hand side of the rear elevation to provide a replacement means of natural light to the rear bedroom. This would impact on a small area of 19th century brickwork. Visually, the proposed arrangement of windows on the rear elevation would be sympathetic to the character of the listed building.



Figure 34: Casement window on the rear elevation of the first floor

4.4 Ground floor alterations

- 4.4.1 Ground floor alterations would include alterations to the layout of modern partitions of no heritage interest. As noted above, the staircase would be removed. This is believed to be of 20th century date and does not relate to the 17th century stair position. As such, the removal of the existing stairs would have a very low level of heritage impact. It is proposed to create a new door opening in the partition in the living room. The partition in the lounge includes a stud and a section of rail (**figure 12**) which appear to be of some age. These timbers are possibly reused but this is not clear. This partition is not original and may relate to the conversion of the house to cottages. The removal of the partition would result in the removal

of some historic fabric relating to later alterations. The majority of the internal partition would be retained. As such, this element of the proposals would have a relatively low level of impact.

4.5 First floor alterations

- 4.5.1 The proposed first floor alterations include a slight reconfiguration of existing partitions and door openings associated with what appear to be 20th century partitions. These changes would not impact on the historic floor plan or important historic fabric. It is also proposed to insert a bathroom to the rear of the chimney breast. The proposed partition enclosing the bathroom would be in line with a truss defining the chimney bay. As such, the proposed bathroom would better define the original first floor layout.



Figure 35: Position of the proposed bathroom partition

- 4.4.2 The current ladder stair to the attic rooms is modern and of no interest (**figure 22**). The historic fabric of the first floor demonstrates that there was historically a ceiling and a door opening for access to the loft space was created historically, as demonstrated by the iron pintles. It should be noted that the first floor was probably open to the roof originally. It is likely that access to this space was originally by a ladder or ladder stair and was probably used for storage rather than accommodation. It is proposed to reposition access to the second floor by inserting a stair on the opposite side of the truss. The ceiling is finished with boards and the character of the joists is currently unknown. The repositioned stair would require the removal of a small area of joists of later date.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 This assessment provides a commentary on the historic development and significance of 1 The Close and provides an assessment of the heritage impacts of the proposed scheme. As such, it is considered that this Heritage Statement meets the requirements set out in paragraph 194 of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information regarding the built heritage.
- 5.1.2 The conclusions of this report are that 1 The Close was built as a 2-unit house (with 2 The Close) in the early 17th century (Phase 1). Part of the rear wing (3 The Close) lies within the

ground floor bathroom of 1 The Close and, based on the character of the timber posts and brick panels, dates from the 17th century. This wing was apparently largely rebuilt in the 19th century. The single storey extension on the north-west side of the listed building appears to have been built in the 18th to 19th centuries (Phase 3). The roof was rebuilt in 2015. Phase 4 is a single storey brick extension to the rear.

- 5.1.3 The proposed scheme represents a sympathetic approach to improving the internal layout and functionality of the house which improves the viability of the listed building. This primarily includes the provision of a first floor bathroom and an improved kitchen/dining area and second floor access that provides improved accommodation for a relatively small family home.
- 5.1.4 The proposed extension and alterations have been designed to avoid direct physical impacts on the Phase 1 fabric and to preserve the character and legibility of the listed building. The kitchen extension would have a low profile and a high level of permeability that would preserve the definition and legibility of the rear aspect of 1 The Close. The proposed stair turret would be a modest change that would incorporate an existing modern lean-to. The stair turret approach would be in keeping with the evolution of the domestic plan in the 17th and 18th centuries. The scale and form of the stair turret would be sympathetic to the host building. Internal alterations would predominantly impact on later changes to the house, mostly relating to 20th century changes.
- 5.1.5 As such, it is considered that the proposed scheme of extension and alterations is sympathetic to the established character and significance of 1 The Close, in accordance with NPPF and the relevant Local Plan policies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bruskill, R W (2000) *Houses and Cottages of Britain*

Hall, L (2005) *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900*