

## Design and access statement for North staircase

### Hill corner cottage

17/01/24

#### Description:

The house is listed as grade two by historic England (ref: IOE01/13759/32) "Early C18 or earlier timber framed house of 2 storeys, 3 and 4 windows, irregular. Hipped tiled roof. Tile hung 1st floor, brick ground floor. C19 and modern square paned casements. Plank doors in moulded frames, No 1 on right return." The present owner of the house is a Chartered Engineer and a Chartered Surveyor. He has lived in listed buildings of various types for the better part of fifty years. and has studied older houses to a great degree, in terms of history and the evolving of construction methods. This inspection has revealed other aspects which suggest that the house is much older the early C18 Century.

There are a number of cross beams which span the full width of the house, which are shaped as being "old ship timbers. The bressumer beams over two inglenook fireplaces are likely thwart beams form an early ship being of non rectangular shape in section and curved in profile. In addition, the rafters in the roof show extensive smoke damage and crystallisation of wood smoke. These various features suggest that the house is a Wealden Hall house where the centre of the house featured open fires with smoke up to the underside of rafters. It is proposed therefore, that as far as possible, the house should be changed as little as possible, but where it is changed, these should reflect the original Hall house structure and expose timbers to reflect the true age of the house.

The staircase is at the North end of the house and is bounded by two walls with a modern doorway (21<sup>st</sup> Century) on the ground floor. Looking at the staircase from the ground floor, the left-hand wall is a modern stud and plasterboard wall which appears to be about 10 to 30 years old. The new modern door and doorway was recently created by the previous occupants to this house; Mr and Mrs C Smith. This door opens into the new extension which was built in 2016.

The right-hand (outer) wall of the staircase is in brickwork and there is an old bricklayer's mark on the outer face of the wall further to the West and about three meters away from the wall of the stairs. The mark indicates that he built this in 1813. As stated above, there is also a window in this wall which has been blocked up on the inside by a piece of plywood where the stairs are now. This indicates that the stairs were inserted into the house in the late 20<sup>th</sup> or early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as the window was simply covered over on the inside to be able to insert the staircase.

The front door and frame appears to be a cheap replacement circa 1970, in softwood. It is now in need of replacement.