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HERITAGE STATEMENT

To accompany an application for retrospective listed building consent for the retention of internal alterations involving the removal of a first floor wall and door, relocation of a second-floor doorway and addition of a partition wall at:-

FLAT 2, 12 ABBOTS WALK, READING RG1 3HW

**Prepared by:- Anthony J Thorpe BA(Hons) MRTPI DipConsHistEnv(RICS)
Affiliate Member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.**

1.00 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

1.01

12 Abbots Walk is an early C19 end-terrace building that adjoins Reading Abbey to the east. It comprises of three floors and a basement. The frontage is clad in Bath Stone with red-brick return and rear, all under a hipped slate roof with brick chimneystacks and a first-floor frontage cast-iron balcony. It is group-listed GII together with the adjoining property 11 Abbots Walk, which has an identical appearance (see appended Heritage England listing and Photo 1. Below).



PHOTO 1. 12 Abbots Walk is the end-terrace building on the left-hand (east) side of the listed terrace. For the avoidance of doubt the retrospective development required no changes whatsoever to external appearance. Photos all dated 03/10/2019.

1.02

The unauthorised works requiring retrospective listed building consent are as follows:-

- 1) At first-floor level:- Removal of an internal partition wall partly surrounding the original first floor WC together with its doorway and a doorway to the kitchen. Making good of walls to match existing skirting boards (no cornice). This work allowed the enlargement of the kitchen area.
- 2) At second-floor level:- Relocation of original central door to front bedroom 1.5m to the west, relocation of built-in wardrobe, addition of partition wall to form ensuite bathroom. Making good of walls to match existing skirting boards and cornice. This work allowed the main front bedroom to have its own ensuite.

1.03

A Certificate of Completion of Works under the Building Regulations was issued by Reading Borough Council on 12th September 2009 (ref: - 05/00260/DALBN) relating to the above works. The applicant was not advised at that time that listed building consent was also required. This only became apparent when the property was offered for sale and the purchaser's solicitor highlighted the lack of listed building consent.

2.00 THE WORKS

2.01

Drawings 19/22/01 & 02 accompany the application and show the internal layout before and after 2009. There was originally a small antechamber off the first floor landing with one doorway serving the original WC and the other the kitchen. Both these doorways were removed. One was re-hung forming the present doorway to the kitchen. The partition wall on the south side of the WC was removed in its entirety. The resulting additional floorspace was integrated into the existing kitchen. The remaining walls and skirting board were made good (there is no cornice) and a fitted kitchen installed.

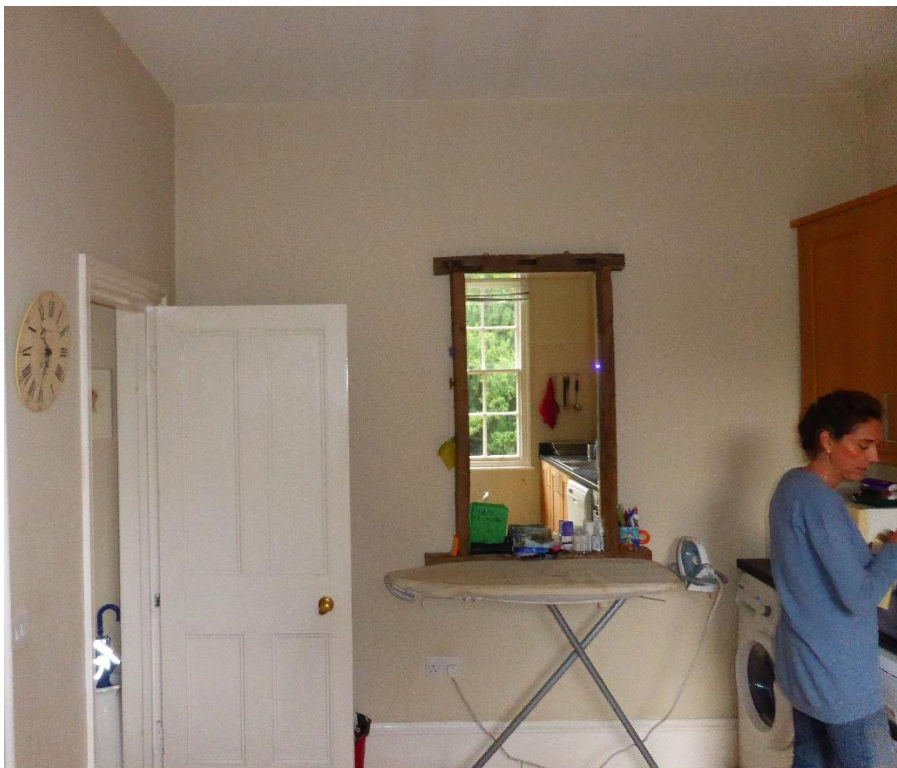


PHOTO 2. North wall of first-floor kitchen as it now exists.

2.02

On the second floor there was originally a slightly off-centre doorway from the landing to the front bedroom. This was removed and relocated 1.5m to the west. This work displaced the original built in wardrobe which was relocated to the east wall adjoining the existing bathroom. The space between the relocated bedroom door and wardrobe was enclosed by a new partition wall to create an ensuite (see Photo 3. below).



PHOTO 3. The door to the ensuite is centre frame, the relocated wardrobe is on the left and the relocated bedroom door on the right. The skirting from the removed first-floor partition wall appears to have been re-used to match existing. The cornice is most likely modern.

3.00 EFFECT ON THE LISTED BUILDING AND ITS GROUP

3.01

The building is frontage listed and contributes to the architectural and historic interest of the group of buildings of which it forms part. No part of the interior fabric is described in the HE official listing. It is our submission that since the works are internal, non-structural, have no effect on the exterior of the heritage asset and blend in imperceptibly with the interior they have a neutral effect on the significance, setting and fabric of the heritage asset.

3.02

The work does not fundamentally affect the original fairly standardised internal residential layout or compartmentalisation of the building and only involves minor changes in the size of rooms and how they connect.

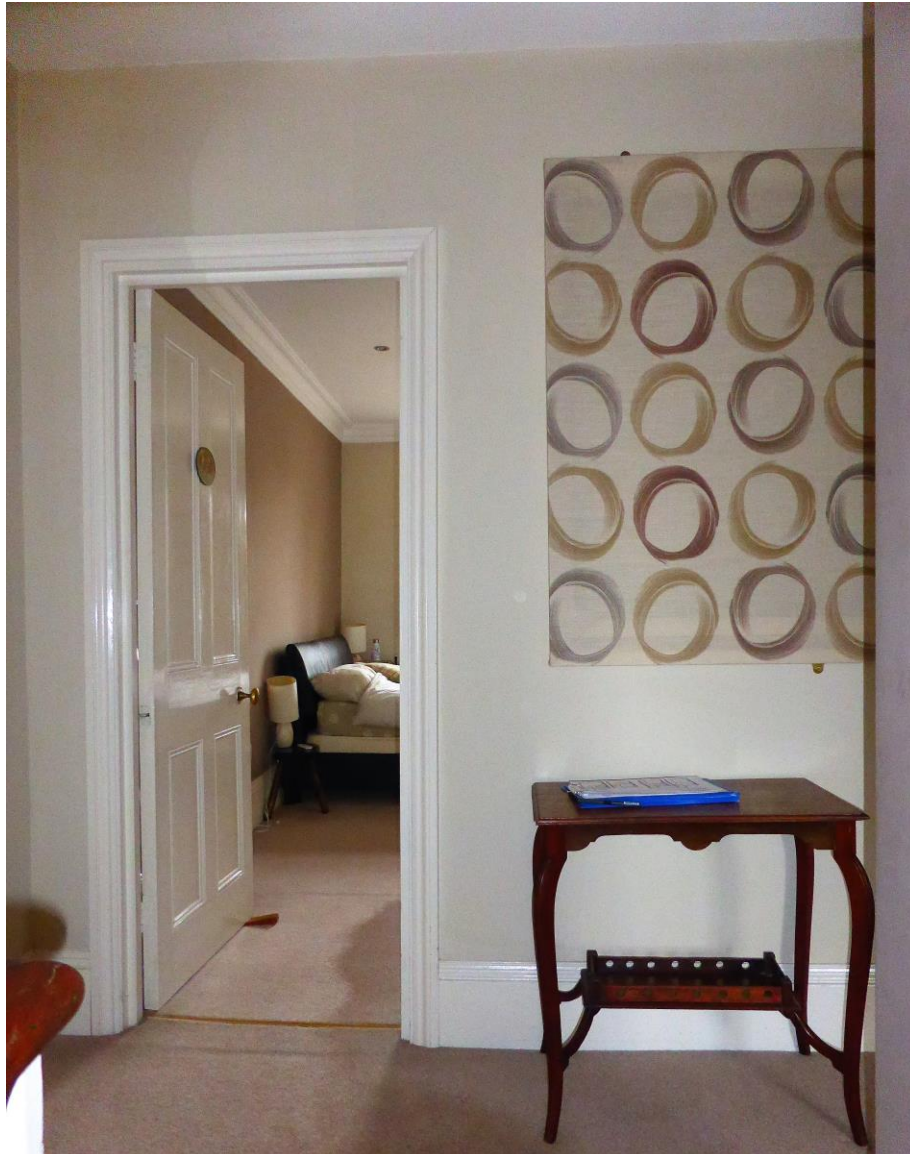


PHOTO 4. Repositioned door to second floor front bedroom.
Original was positioned immediately right of the table.

4.00 CONCLUSIONS

4.01

The Council approved the works under the Building Regulations in 2009. However the applicant was not advised that listed building consent was also required. This retrospective application seeks to legitimise these unapproved works.

4.02

After following the Historic England advice on assessing the significance of the alterations, it is considered that the relatively modest internal works do not have a negative impact upon the ability to understand or appreciate the significance of 12 Abbots walk. The works only involve minor changes in the size of rooms and how they connect. Therefore, in my professional opinion, the works do not cause harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

4.03

The works are all internal and will not impact upon any important views to or from the house or the adjoining Abbey Ruins. Accordingly, I can find no conflict in the proposed development with the statutory duty in Sections 66 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Local Plan Policy and respectfully suggest that the retrospective application should be allowed.

4.04

In accordance with Paragraph 189. of the NPPF the level of detail supplied in this Heritage Statement is considered to be proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.

5.00 APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – copy of Heritage England Statutory Listing:-

Details

ABBOT'S WALK 1. 5128 Nos 11 and 12 SU 7173 NE 1/3 II GV 2. Early C19. 3 storeys and basement. Bath stone. Strings at 1st floor impost level of arched windows and at 2nd floor cill level. Wide flat eaves. Slate roof. Glazing bar sash windows. 2 ranges of windows each, arched recesses for 1st floor windows. 6 panel doors with fanlights also recessed. Mid C19 cast-iron balcony across both houses with bowed section. Cast-iron fleur-de-lys railings in front.

Listing NGR: SU7197273567

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AJT/SB/17/10/2019