

Heritage Impact Assessment for^[1]_[SEP]

10 EAST STOCKWELL STREET COLCHESTER CO1 1SS

For Mr. & Mrs. R Joseph



Cover photo: Front elevation in East Stockwell Street, Colchester
National Grid Reference: 599663 – 225356

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Bob Kindred Heritage Consultants were commissioned by Kirkham Sheidow Architects on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. R Joseph to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment [HIA] for No.10 East Stockwell Street, Colchester CO1 1SS in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] in support of a proposal for internal alterations and minor external alterations at the rear of the dwelling.

1.2 No. 10 East Stockwell Street is a designated heritage asset, Listed Grade 2 and situated within the central Colchester Conservation Area and adjacent to a number of other listed buildings but the intended works would amount to internal alteration, less than substantial internal demolition and minor external alteration to the rear where it is considered that there would be no adverse heritage implications for the setting of the adjacent listed buildings or for the Conservation Area.

1.3 An external and internal inspection of the building to assess the impact of the proposals and the immediate surroundings was undertaken on 20th February 2018.

1.4 This report may be deposited with Essex Historic Environment Record and a copy sent to the National Monuments Record maintained by Historic England if required.



Fig.1 Location Plan Not to scale

2. NATIONAL POLICY

2.1 The law relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is enshrined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This places a duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and of their settings (Sections 16 and 66); while there is a similar duty with respect to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas (Section 72).

2.2 The Heritage Impact Assessment to accompany a proposal for internal alteration, less than substantial internal demolition and minor external alteration to the rear is intended to comply with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 128.

2.3 Applicants must describe the impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage asset to a level of detail proportionate to the assets' importance. This should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of that impact on the significance; and further, to assist under the terms of paragraph 129 with an assessment of the relationship between the conservation of the special architectural and historic interest of the building and the alterations necessary to ensure its continued viability.

2.4 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF apports great weight to a designated asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The NPPF asserts that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration and any harm requires clear and convincing justification.

2.5 It is considered that the heritage implications of the proposal are less than substantial and where this will lead to less than significant harm, paragraph 134 of the NPPF requires the special interest to be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the building's optimum viable use. This will be the responsibility of the Council as planning authority to determine.

2.6 The NPPF defined criteria in paragraph 131 as the basis on which the Council should determine applications. In this instance the proposal would therefore aim to: [a] sustain and enhance the residential use of the listed building and put it to a more efficient and practical use consistent with its long-term conservation; and [b] positively contribute to sustaining this residential part of the centre of Colchester and the area's economic and social vitality.

3. STATUTORY LISTING

3.1 No.10 East Stockwell Street was Listed Grade 2 on 24th February 1950 [List Entry Number: 1306958, UID: 116962, National Grid Reference: TL 99662 25355] together with Nos. 8 and 9) to which, for the purposes of the statutory listing, it was considered at the time to be integral. It is not clear on what basis in 1950 it was apparently concluded to be one property with wings rather than several separate properties.

3.2 The joint statutory list entry description for Nos. 8 to 10 is as follows:

"Late Georgian front of red brick to earlier building with older wing extending east at the rear. 2 storey attics and cellars, roofs tiled, No 10 is at a slightly lower roof level, There is a 2-window addition between Nos. 7 and 8. The front is finished with a coping, 7-window range of broad double hung sashes with glazing bars, in plain reveals, rectangular fanlight. No 10 has fluted pilasters and flat Doric hood.

Nos. 7 to 16 (consec) and Stockwell Congregational Chancel form a group."

3.3 The joint description covering all three property-numbers is very perfunctory and typical of those buildings added to the statutory list during the first national survey undertaken by investigators from the Ministry of Town & Country Planning¹.

3.4 Reference to "...a 2-window addition between Nos 7 and 8..." is puzzling and appears to be either a typographical error or unrelated to the statutory list entry.

3.5 In the immediate post-war era designation descriptions served more for the purposes of identification than as an objective evaluation of the degrees of significance and/or the component features contributing to a building's special architectural and historic interest. In this respect the description of No. 10 East Stockwell Street does not represent current best practice regarding designation and the assessment of relative significance.

3.6 No reference is made in the listing to the special interest of the interior or to the rear elevations (although an older rear wing is referred to). Prior to recent heritage protection reforms, interiors and the rear parts of buildings were not routinely inspected prior to a building being protected if the calibre of street elevation (or forming group value) was considered sufficiently of interest to justify inclusion on the statutory list.

3.7 Such descriptions are considered unhelpful to the local planning authority; the owner; any professional advisor, the statutory amenity bodies or to the general public in evaluating the relative merits of the surviving historic fabric.

3.8 The description of No.10 East Stockwell Street was amended on 19th February 1959 but apparently only in so far as the address is concerned and has not been subsequently amended. The statutory list description itself is therefore effectively about 68 years old.

¹ The Ministry of Town & Country Planning created in 1943 became the Ministry of Local Government and Planning in January 1951 and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government after the October 1951 election.

4. DESCRIPTIVE RECORD AND SIGNIFICANCE

Exterior front

4.1 No.10 East Stockwell Street forms a separate dwelling from the terrace of Nos. 8 and 9 to the south. The front entrance is on the left (with a rear passageway door to its left).

4.2 The first floor has a three-window range but while the two main windows to the first floor fenestration are traditional in form and type and comprise double hung sashes with glazing bars under painted window heads with incised keystone motifs; the right-hand window (which conventionally might have been expected to be of the same width and depth); is notably shorter. It also has a rectangular mid-Victorian cast ashlar head with chamfered bottom edge stops. It would appear that the joinery to this window might have been renewed in c.2007

4.3 There is only one traditional, conventional double hung sash to the right of the front door while further to right is a small three light mullioned window. There is no indication in the external red facing brickwork to suggest the existence of an earlier larger opening in place of the present mullioned window, particularly as the front façade has been comprehensively repointed in a cementitious mortar. The placement, sizes and dates of the differently sized window openings therefore defy a clear explanation.

4.4 It would appear that at one time No.10 was separated from No.12 by a gap from the earlier timber-framed and plastered building to the north rather than abutting it as it does now. The facade brickwork runs across this apparent later extension almost seamlessly apart from a vertical line of paired brick closers to alternative courses of brickwork where the building appears to have been extended.

4.5 Behind the shallow front parapet there is an axial shallow pitched, natural slate roof that cannot be seen from the street. This appears to be Victorian as are rear facing sash windows overlooking the rear passageway.

4.6 The original building has a clay plain tiled roof set back behind the shallow front parapet and is hipped with the ridge running front to rear. This roof also cannot be seen from the street. A flat-headed dormer is located mid-way along the south facing roof slope.

4.7 A large flat roofed red brick single storey kitchen extension was added to the rear of the building in c.1962 and altered after c.2006. (Fig. 2)



Fig. 2 Modern c.1962 extension from rear courtyard

Interior

4.8 The interior is described only in so far as it relates to the proposals but it was noted that the property does contain a number of good late 18th century or early 19th century chimneypieces and it is understood that in renovating the property in the last third of the 20th century a previous owner had replicated or reinstated a number of items of authentic early 19th century period architectural joinery in including skirtings and possibly some of the panelled doors. There are no surviving historic ceiling cornices nor have any reproductions been introduced.

4.9 The house has a narrow frontage but a deep plan with an unconventional and inconvenient circulation pattern as described below.

4.10 The proposals are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and scheme drawings by Kirkham Sheidow Architects to which this heritage impact assessment should be cross referred.

Ground floor

4.11 The front door leads by a short hallway and four steps to a small inner vestibule. A single step up to the rear leads to a small shower room and toilet. A single step up from the vestibule leads to the front ground floor reception room. This also provides the only access to the rest of the ground floor to the rear (other than by the side passageway) via a long corridor situated parallel to the party wall to No.9.

4.12 The stair from the vestibule running across the width of the house leads to the first floor, while a door adjacent to the stair gives access via a stair down to a large cellar. The stair from the vestibule to the first floor appears to be comparatively modern and the ground floor newel post and a short run of four turned balusters are no earlier than Edwardian in date. (Figs. 3 & 4)



Fig. 3 Stair from vestibule to first floor
Sitting to the rear of the stair shown in Fig. 5
Cellar stair door on the extreme right



Fig. 4 Newel post and balusters
Joinery to a typical late 19th – early 20th century
pattern

4.13 As will be noted from the Kirkham Sheidow drawing of the ground floor plan as existing, that immediately to the rear of the stair running from the entrance vestibule to first floor stair (Fig. 2) mentioned above, is a second near identical stair also running from the ground to first floor stair but in the opposite direction. (Fig. 5)

4.14 As the Design and Access Statement points out, the two stairs are separated by full height walls and are visually and physically entirely separate and arranged in a crisscross/scissor relationship.

4.15 The purpose of this second stair is a puzzle. With regard to conventional domestic layouts, this author has not encountered this arrangement in nearly 40 years of professional practice. The second stair has no architectural fittings of note (i.e. no architectural joinery fixtures: newel post or balusters etc.) and the staircase construction (as with the first staircase) appears to be comparatively modern.

4.16 It is understood that at one time the property was used as offices for the British Red Cross and it is speculated that the insertion of a second stair may have been in order to make use of the ground and first floors as two relatively self-contained units.



Fig. 5 Stair from corridor to first floor
Situated forward of the stair shown in Fig. 3

4.17 The two parallel staircases pose a fundamental circulation problem for both the ground and first floors. On the ground floor the principal reception room (with a fine chimneypiece) must be pressed into service as a necessary circulation space as the only route to the rear; while on the first floor similar access to the rear bedroom accommodation is required either via the larger of the two bedrooms or via the middle bedroom. The landing from the forward stair serves a small front bedroom over the side passage and a small rear bathroom also over the passageway.

4.18 To the rear of the dwelling is a large utilitarian flat roofed single storey brick extension added in c.1962. This was to provide additional bedrooms and a bathroom lit by unsympathetic asymmetrical casement windows to the north facing side elevation and the rear elevation.

4.19 In c.2007 the fenestration on this single storey extension was amended to form French doors to the north side and a lantern skylight was added later to better illuminate the space, which had been repurposed to form a kitchen and family room overlooking the rear garden.

First floor

4.20 The first floor front to rear corridor (parallel to the part wall to No.9) is lit by a high level, flat-headed dormer window on the south facing main roof slope.

4.21 On the rear first floor elevation to the master bedroom, the fenestration comprises a pair of late 20th century unsympathetically proportioned, asymmetrical, timber, top and side hung casement windows.

Proposals

Staircase 2

4.22 As the internal layout of the house does not conform to traditional spatial principles resulting in one of the principle ground floor reception rooms being pressed into service as circulation space; and as circulation on the first floor to bedrooms and bathrooms present similar problems of circulation, the layout of the house is impractical for normal family life.

4.23 The circulation therefore needs re-planning and deployment of the space with the minimum of general disruption to the significant historic fabric of the building overall. It is considered that this objective would be best achieved by the removal of the more rearward of the two modern staircases. This would enable a cross-corridor to be created from the entrance vestibule on the ground floor to the rear of the forward stair via the existing south side corridor to the living accommodation and kitchen at the rear. This would be a better route to using the front room.

4.24 A new landing above the removed rearward stair would enable the existing south side corridor to access the all the bedrooms without two of them performing the additional function of circulation space.

4.25 It is considered that as the construction of the stair appears to be comparatively modern and of no special architectural or historic interest; there appears to be no historical precedent for having two adjoining parallel staircases; and there is a necessity to improve circulation for normal modern living and thus the long-term viability of the building as a family home, there is sufficient justification for removal of this secondary modern staircase.

Front ground floor reception room

4.26 In forming a new cross-corridor to the rear of the first stair by removal of the second stair it is intended to seal the opening from the hall vestibule thus better reinstating the proportions of the front reception room. A correctly proportioned six-panel door and matching architraves would then be installed what is presently the wall opening to the rear corridor. The modern proportions of the existing reception room door from the hall vestibule are smaller than historically authentic and its reuse is not proposed. It is considered that these works would be a positive enhancement to the special architectural and historic interest and significance, character, appearance and usability of the front ground floor main reception room.

Formation of new rear en suite bathroom

4.27 To the rear of the second stair, where removal of the staircase will enable a new landing to be formed, as will be noted from the Kirkham Sheidow drawings; there is presently a middle bedroom (with a master bedroom to the rear of that).

4.28 Presently access to the first floor bathroom (above the passageway) from the master bedroom is only possible by traversing the middle bedroom or the larger of the two front bedrooms. On a day-to-day basis, functionally this is highly unsatisfactory.

4.29 It is proposed to sub-divide the middle bedroom to make it smaller and create an en suite bathroom for the rear master bedroom served from the first floor corridor (i.e. parallel with the party wall to No.9). The floor area ratios would become approximately two thirds to one third. The middle bedroom has a good early 19th century chimneypiece that will be retained in situ but has no other original internal fixtures: cornices, skirtings etc. of interest. (Figs 6 & 7)

4.30 The en suite to the master bedroom accessed from the side corridor is intended to be lit from a ley-light in a recess above the corridor wall which in turn is lit by the south facing dormer referred to above. To encapsulate the en suite together with the master bedroom it is proposed to reposition the existing six-panel bedroom door (which has attractive historic door furniture), closer to the first floor landing.



Figs. 6 & 7 Middle bedroom with existing early 19th century chimneypiece (to be retained) and doorway to form access from the rear master bedroom to the proposed en suite bathroom formed from the sub-division of the middle bedroom.

Re-fenestration to the rear

4.31 As noted 4.11 above, the fenestration to the first floor rear elevation comprised a pair of late 20th century unsympathetic asymmetrical timber casement windows. (Figs. 8 & 9)

4.32 It is proposed to replace these with two correctly proportioned six-over six light sliding sash windows that are considered more in keeping with the architectural character of the building.

4.33 The north side elevation of the modern single storey flat roofed extension has an existing pair of timber French doors with small glazing bars and it is proposed to replace these in the same opening with a pair of simple powder coated aluminium framed outward opening doors. On the east (rear) elevation there is another existing pair of timber French doors also with small glazing bars (see Figure 2) and the intention is to replace these in a widened opening with a pair of simple powder coated aluminium framed sliding doors.

4.34 As the extension is modern and the external visual aspect is concealed from the public realm, it is considered that the proposal would have no impact on the special architectural and historic interest and significance of the building in this location.



Fig. 8 Modern asymmetrical windows to rear first floor elevation



Fig. 9 Modern windows to rear first floor master bedroom

Treatment of the rear single storey flat roof

4.35 As the present bituminous felt flat roof to the single storey rear extension presents a barren aspect to the rear view from the master bedroom it is proposed that this large area of flat roof is replaced over the existing structure with a sedum (green) roof.

4.36 No other changes to the existing rear courtyard landscaping are intended and these works are not considered to have any impact on the special architectural and historic interest and significance of the listed building nor upon the character and appearance of the conservation area in views from St Helen's Lane.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 As noted in Section 2, NPPF expects an evaluation of the impact of the proposals on the significance to a proportionate level of detail to the assets' importance and although the principal issues concern the effect of the proposals on fabric of the listed building, the potential impact on the setting and that of adjacent listed buildings on the conservation area is also a material consideration.

5.2 East Stockwell Street sits within the central Colchester conservation area, a designated heritage asset and as such the policies in the NPPF apply to it.

5.3 Although local planning authorities have a duty to review their conservation area designations from time to time it is understood that the original boundaries of the conservation area have not subsequently been revised. There is no Conservation Area Appraisal [CAA]² for this conservation area³.

5.4 The frontage to East Stockwell Street is to remain unaltered.

5.5 The rear of the property principally faces east although there is a north facing two-storey side elevation to the passageway and the single storey flat roofed rear extension that also has a north elevation to No.12 East Stockwell Street.

5.6 In relation to views to the rear of No.10 East Stockwell Street from the public realm within the conservation area there is a specific and singular southward view to part of the upper north facing two-storey rear wing from a small private car park off the very narrow St Helen's Lane. This view is framed by the buildings on either side of the parking area and by an interposed tall brick boundary wall approximately 7' 6" high to the rear. Landscaping in the rear curtilage of 12 East Stockwell Street also constrains the view from the public realm. Fortunately the existing unsympathetic first floor windows to the rear elevation of No.10 can only just be glimpsed from St Helens Lane because of the acute angle of view from the lane.

5.7 Overall, the proposed external alterations to the fenestration are considered to be minor in extent and a welcome improvement over the existing situation. The impact of the external alterations on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting viewed from East Stockwell Street would be nil and that from St Helens Lane would be negligible.

² A CAA would usually explain the reasons for designation, describe the area, outline its particular qualities and character and highlight those issues needing to be addressed in order to ensure the area's preservation and enhancement.

³ Based on English Heritage's Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' as reissued as Historic England Advice Note [HEAN] 1 February 2016

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires a description of the potential impact on a statutorily listed building's significance to a level of detail proportionate to its importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of that impact.

6.2 The 1950 Listing description is perfunctory and does not aid understanding of the relative significance of the various parts of No.10 East Stockwell, defining it's special interest only in terms of the architectural features of the front façade. Neither the interior, nor the rear elevations were evaluated or described. This does not aid an assessment of significance.

6.3 The evolution of the building and alterations, particularly on the latter part of the 20th century and the likely date of the staircase works is difficult to determine. The purpose of two parallel staircases running in opposite directions one behind the other are a complete mystery and never previously encountered, however they pose a fundamental circulation problem on both floors and the removal of the rearward one, although a major localized physical intervention is situated in a part of the building without any architectural joinery or other noteworthy embellishment. Removal would radically improve the circulation of the dwelling and greatly enhance its suitability for modern family life and thus its long-term sustainability.

6.4 The other associated alterations are modest in extent to form an additional small en suite bathroom and improvement in the form of the replacement of unsympathetic fenestration from the last third of the 20th century with more traditional sash window joinery in keeping with the age and character of the listed building.

6.5 It is considered that there are no implications regarding the setting to the rear for the adjacent listed buildings or from the singular view in the narrow St Helens Lane and therefore on the character and appearance of the conservation area and no other adjacent listed buildings would not be adversely affected.

6.5 On the basis of the limited significance of the fabric of the second staircase in particular and the significant benefits that would derive from improved internal circulation; and more commodious and practical family living, it is considered that the proposals would constitute satisfactory minor alterations thereby sustaining and enhancing its residential use and putting it to a more efficient and practical purpose consistent with its long-term occupation and thus its conservation.

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March 2018*

Authorship of this Heritage Statement

The author of this report is Bob Kindred MBE BA IHBC MRTPI - the former Head of Conservation Urban Design & Planning Policy at Ipswich Borough Council with over 38 years experience in the heritage sector. He was awarded the MBE for services to heritage in 1999.

He is a member of the Council of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation; a Trustee of the Ancient Monuments Society; a Casework Panel member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; an honorary member of the Suffolk Association of Architects; a member of the RIBA Suffolk Design Review Panel; and a member of the St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Diocesan Advisory Committee. He is joint consulting editor of the international Journal of Architectural Conservation.

He was the former Special Heritage Advisor to the House of Commons Culture Media & Sport Committee from 2005 to 2012; a member of the UK Commission for UNESCO from 1999 to 2010; and a Main Committee of the Victorian Society from 1987 to 1997.