

242156 – 11 The Terrace, Shute End

Application 242156 proposes the alteration to no. 11 The Terrace, Shute End, a Grade II listed building located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area. The main element of 11 The Terrace dates from the 16th century, a single cell timber-framed house with later 18th and 19th century alteration and addition.

The proposals can be broadly summarised as follows:

- New connection between 16th core and 19th century element as to facilitate a doorway and subsequent creation of a dressing room and en-suite.
- Related to this, the removal and blocking up of a 19th century door with a new stud partition within the room currently known as 'Bedroom 3'.
- Further removal of partition walling in the current bathroom.

The application followed the withdrawal of application 230825 which included the above proposed alteration.

The significance and special interest of the listed building is derived, in part, from its surviving historic fabric, plan form and architectural qualities. The historic form, use of traditional materials, modest scale and restrained architectural detailing positively contribute to Shute End and the wider Wokingham Conservation Area.

Concern is raised over the potential loss of historic fabric as result of the opening between Bedrooms 1 and 3. Whilst some exploratory work has been undertaken, this is not sufficient as to fully understand the nature of the underlying fabric and thus appropriately assess its significance. As a 16th century structure, presumably mostly timber framed, there is a possibility of historic timbers in this walling, with the area of concern perfectly placed for a wind brace and vertical studs to be located and thus a doorway in this position may cut directly across this framing.

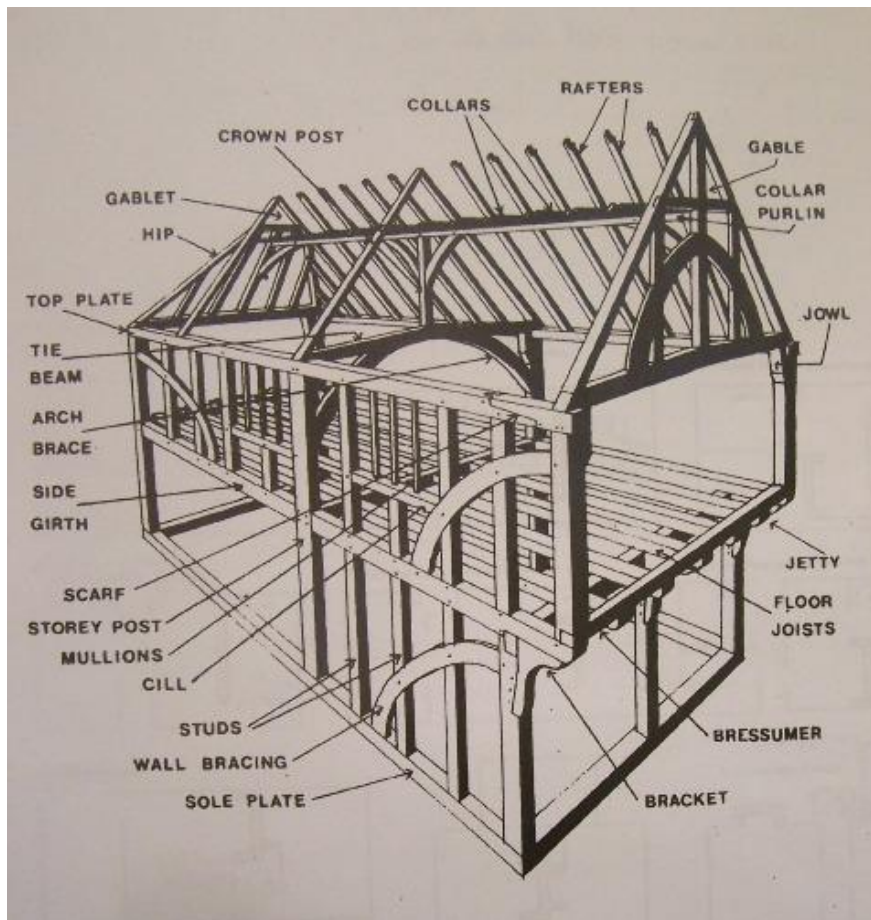
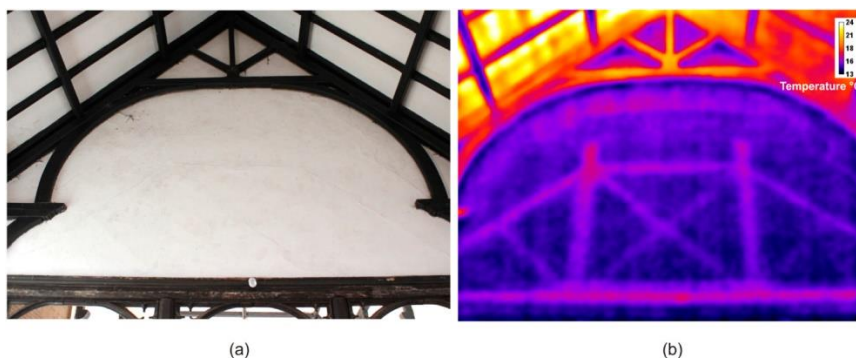


Fig. 1 – A broadly similar sample 16th century timber framed structure to the core of 11 The Terrace, showing the wind brace and studs on the first floor. There is potential for 11 The Terrace to have a similar arrangement.

If timber framing is located in this area, then alteration or removal as to facilitate the proposed opening would seek to harm the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. To further assess the impact upon the fabric may require more invasive exploratory works, which in themselves may require separate consent. Alternatively, non-invasive methods, such as thermal imaging (see sample below) may seek to identify the location of timber framing. Until such time as to the exact nature of all the fabric to be impacted can be understood, the principle of an opening here cannot be supported.



(a)

(b)

Fig. 2 – Thermal imaging showing timber framing hidden beneath plaster. Source: Thermal Imaging for the Archaeological Investigation of Historic Buildings by Christopher Brooke Department of History, University of Nottingham, Published: 3 September 2018

Further to the potential impact upon historic fabric from connecting Bedrooms 1 and 3, the proposed loss/blocking up of the doorway between the Bedroom 3 and the bathroom lobby raises concern. The loss of the apparent 19th century door and associated frame and joinery would seek to erode the significance of the legibility of the evolution the building. Even if the doorway was retained and simply 'locked' shut, it is uncertain as to how practical this would be given the proposed siting and orientation of the en-suite bathroom.

Notwithstanding the above concerns over the loss of historic fabric is the impact upon the plan form. The area in question appears to be an addition of the 1870s as to provide an entrance hall and additional bedroom above, but has always had the linear route pattern 'front to back' on both ground and first floors. This evolved plan form, which is apparently unchanged from the 19th century, allows for the clear separation of the 16th century single celled element. Which being effectively separated from the later addition can clearly be read and thus understood, contributing to the building's significance. The creation of a 'latitudinal' route from the 16th century core linking with the later addition would result in loss of the evidential value in determining the legibility of the primary element.

As such, the proposed alterations would result in erosion to the surviving plan form and would seek to dilute and thus undermine the legibility of the listed building. Combined with this, the proposed loss of fabric would, and has the potential to, fundamentally and permanently impact the building's special interest. As such, the as proposed alterations would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. This harm would arise through the loss of historic fabric and erosion to the plan form resulting in a negative impact to the special architectural and historic interest. No public benefits have been identified that would outweigh this harm as any benefits arising from the proposal would be largely private and in direct relation to the current occupier.

Through the loss of historic fabric and erosion to the plan form the proposed alterations would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building (S16 and S66, P(LBCA)A 90).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan.