

HERIOTS, WOKINGHAM ROAD, HURST, BERKSHIRE

Heritage Note – Assessment of unauthorised works

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This Heritage Note provides a heritage assessment of the unauthorised works set out in a letter sent to the owner of Heriots by Wokingham Borough Council on 19th December 2023.
- 1.1.2 A site visit to understand the historic development of the listed building and the nature of the unauthorised works was carried out on 8th February 2024.

1.2 Designations

- 1.2.1 Heriots was added to the statutory *List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II on 16th October 1983. The list description reads as follows:

Cottage. Early C17, 3 timber framed bays, colour washed brick infilling, tile roof. Large chimney with bread oven on east gable. 2 storeys. C20 casement windows irregular and entrance door under gabled porch on south front. Large C20 extension on north. Interior: most original timbers visible, with braces, and chamfered joists with stopped ends.



Figure 1: Oblique view of the south and west elevations of Heriots in 2004

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE ASSET

2.1 Historic map regression

- 2.1.1 The 1911 edition of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows Heriots with a roughly square footprint. There is what appears to be an outbuilding to the north of the cottage.

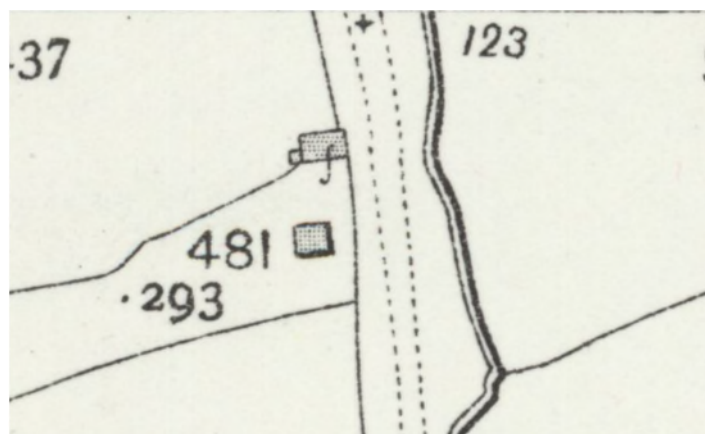


Figure 2: Extract from the 1911 edition of the Ordnance Survey map

- 2.1.2 The 1965-72 edition of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows an enlarged footprint to the north and west and with a shallow projecting element on the south-west side. The footprint of the outbuilding to the north appears to have been reduced in size, suggesting that it had been rebuilt.

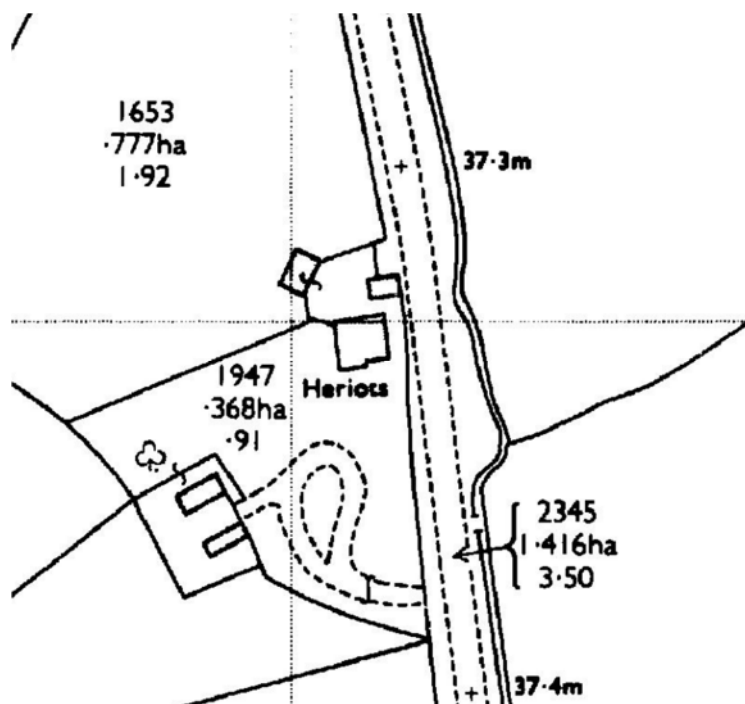


Figure 3: Extract from 1965-72 edition of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map

2.2 Site observations

- 2.2.1 Observation of the historic fabric of the listed building demonstrate that it was built as a 2-unit house. The ground floor was originally two unequally sized rooms as demonstrated by the cross beam with evidence for studs and stave holes. The wide joists include chamfers and curved step stops which indicate an early 17th century date rather than later. There is a trimmer in the north-east corner of Phase 1 which potentially indicates the former position of a winder stair. The smaller western space was probably an unheated parlour. The larger eastern room would probably have served as a kitchen/living room and includes a gable end chimney.

- 2.2.2 The wall frames include a mix of straight and slightly curved head braces. The roof structure is queen strut with clasped purlins. Weathered finishes on the north and west sides of the frame (viewed internally) demonstrate the extents of the Phase 1 house.
- 2.2.3 Historic map regression and the evidence of the fabric, e.g. Fletton bricks, mock timbers, demonstrate a c. mid-20th century date for the enlargement of the original Phase 1 house. The 2-storey rear wing may be slightly earlier but is post-1911. The western side extension appears to have incorporated reused timbers into the structure. It also appears that the outbuilding to the north of the house was rebuilt at around the same time.



Figure 4: Suggested ground floor phase plan

3.0 UNAUTHORISED WORKS

3.1 Bay A

- 3.1.1 **Door opening between the family room and study** – the modern stud partition has been removed. No further action required.
- 3.1.2 **Brick fireplace surround** – There is no clear evidence for when this was carried out but it appears likely that it formed part of the c. mid-20th century extensions, i.e. pre-listing. I suggest that no further action is required.
- 3.1.3 **Bread oven** – There is no clear evidence for a bread oven on the east elevation of Phase 1. The brickwork to the right of the chimney is different to the rest of the east gable elevation. However, there isn't any evidence in the brickwork of the chimney stack to suggest a bread oven.

3.2 Bay B

- 3.2.1 **Partition between Bay A and Bay B** – A modern stud partition was inserted by the owner and this appears on the estate agents' plan. This partition has been removed and reveals the evidence for the original partition in the form of mortices and stave holes along the soffit of the cross beam. I suggest that no further action is required.

3.3 Bay C

- 3.3.1 **Bottom of the staircase altered** – The bottom of the staircase lies within the Phase 2 20th century extension and is not considered to be of heritage value. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.3.2 **Floor joists** - The floor joists and beams form part of the Phase 2 extension and appears to have incorporated some reused timbers. The floor joist layout forms part of the Phase 2 extension and does not represent a post-listing alteration. No further action required.
- 3.3.3 **Upstand removed** – This was inserted to form a doorway but the present owner and has been removed returning the opening, presumably, back to its appearance at the time of listing. I suggest that no further action is required.
- 3.3.4 **Door opening into kitchen** - As above.
- 3.3.5 **2no. small windows in the west elevation** – These were Phase 2 windows and not considered to be of heritage value. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.3.6 **Southern external wall removed enclosed by the lean-to** – This wall formed part of Phase 2 and is not considered to be of heritage value. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.3.7 **Off-centre axial beam** – This forms part of the Phase 2 structure and does not represent an alteration. No further action required.
- 3.3.8 **Faux fireplace** – This is located within the Phase 2 western extension. The fireplace does not impact on historic fabric or on the layout of a historic room and, as such, does not impact on the historic floor plan. The faux fireplace does not have harmful impacts on the significance of the listed building. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.3.9 **Additional alterations** - It was also noticed that the form of the window opening on the south elevation of the lean-to has been altered (compare with the 2004 photo). Subject to the materials of the existing window, this change could be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.4 Kitchen

- 3.4.1 **Cupboard** – Located within the Phase 2 rear extension which is not considered to be of heritage value. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.4.2 **Ceiling and timbers** – These are considered to form part of the Phase 2 rear extension and does not represent an alteration. No further action required.
- 3.4.3 **Window to north elevation blocked a faux fireplace built** - Located within the Phase 2 rear extension which is not considered to be of heritage value. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.

- 3.4.4 **Wall between kitchen and study removed** – This a double door width opening through the partition between the kitchen and study has impacted on Phase 2 fabric of no heritage value. The definition between the two rooms remains highly legible and, as such, the hierarchy of rooms is not adversely impacted. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.5 Study

- 3.5.1 **Triple light window in the east elevation** – This is part of the Phase 2 rear extensions and of no heritage value. This change could potentially be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.5.2 **Wood burner enclosure and flue** – the brick enclosure has been removed. A more discreet method of installing a flue could potentially be explored. Does the flue need to be so wide in section?

3.6 Bay C - first floor

- 3.6.1 **Triple window has been replaced by French doors** – This is within the Phase 2 western extension and is of no heritage value. Depending on the acceptability of the single storey side extension, this change could potentially be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.7 External changes

- 3.7.1 **Triple window replaced by French doors on western gable end** – As above (3.6.1). The timber referred to is mock timber over a cavity wall construction with Fletton bricks.
- 3.7.2 **Western gable has been timber clad** – Phase 2 extension with mock timbers. The weatherboard cladding conceals the mock timbers but is a reversible alteration. The definition and character of the Phase 1 part of the house has not been harmed by this change. This change could be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.7.3 **Addition of sun room** – This abuts the Phase 2 side extension and therefore does not impact on fabric of heritage value. A single storey garden room in this position would not appear to be harmful to the character of the listed building. However, some of the detailing such as the crown roof and materials such as chunky ridge tiles appear incongruous and some design modifications may need to be considered.
- 3.7.4 **Alteration and extension of flat roofed first-floor extension** – Comparison of the existing rear first-floor extension with the 2011 approved drawings show a number of differences, including a crown roof rather than a double pitched gabled roof and a different arrangement of windows. Visually, the ridge line of the crown roof is in line with the perpendicular extension to the rear and is therefore not overly prominent on the rear elevation. The crown roof has replaced a flat roofed box dormer and, although not ideal, does represent an enhancement to the former appearance of the rear elevation. These changes could potentially be regularised through a retrospective application.
- 3.7.5 **Timber cladding on eastern elevation of two-storey rear extension** – The rear extension is Phase 2 and of brick construction, probably cavity wall. The timber cladding is not visually harmful to the character of the listed building and preserves the legibility of the Phase 1 house. The timber cladding is also reversible. These changes could be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.7.6 **Addition of tall black wood burner flue** – This is visually prominent and more discreet alternatives could be explored.

3.8 External changes affecting curtilage listed structures

3.8.1 **Curtilage listed barn joined to the dwelling by a single storey link** – A structure is shown in the position of the current barn on the 1911 map. This appears to have been larger than the current structure which has been rebuilt with concrete blocks and machine sawn timbers. The current building is unlikely to pre-date 1948 and may not therefore be curtilage listed. The link structure is of modest size and form and does not blur the definition of the Phase 1 house which was substantially extended in the c. mid-20th century. This change could potentially be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.8.2 **Addition of a brick-built log store and brick gate pier** – My understanding is that the gate piers are to be removed. The brick-built log store is a modest sized structure discreetly positioned to the rear of the Phase 2 extensions. This could potentially be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.8.3 **Timber recladding of outbuilding** – The cladding is over concrete block construction and is assumed to broadly form part of the Phase 2 works to the house.

3.9 New structures added to the building

3.9.1 **Enlargement of the first-floor element over the kitchen** – See above (3.7.4).

3.9.2 **Timber clad (?) sun room** – See above (3.7.3).

3.9.3 **Timber clad link structure** – See above (3.8.1).

3.9.4 **Entrance lobby built off kitchen's northern side** – The lean-to extension abuts Phase 2 extensions and the link structure and does not therefore impact on historic fabric. The overall scale, form and use of materials blends with the rest of the rear aspect of the listed building as it currently is. This extension could potentially be regularised through a retrospective application.

3.9.5 **Lean-to room added to eastern aspect of study** – This has been removed. No further action is required.

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23rd February 2024