

11 NOV 2011

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MOLEWOOD END, MOLEWOOD ROAD: 6-2011/2433
HERTFORD SG14 3LT

H1993 – Alteration to the fireplace at 32 Fore Street, Hatfield, AL9 5AH for Mr and Mrs Ryan

DESIGN, ACCESS and HISTORIC STATEMENT

1.ASSESSMENT

1.1 Description

Fore St., Hatfield is a street of mixed styles, most having been associated with service to Hatfield House, whose service gateway is at the top of the street.

32, Fore St appears to be part of a row of 19th C. small houses, with a brick facade, sash windows and a front door opening into the parlour. However, internally it is obviously an older oak framed structure of various ages, but possibly originally of the 17thC. There is a brick chimney with a fireplace facing into the front parlour.

Behind the chimney, with access through a door on the left, is a second room used as a general living and dining room, with open access to the kitchen. There is a staircase from the dining room to the first floor, which was the subject of improvements, approved by Listed Building consent S6/2010/2189/LB on the 26/11/10 (see attached notice). The same approval permitted the demolition of a 19C fireplace in the dining room attached to the original chimney.

2.STRUCTURE

2.1 The chimney supports some of the floor joists, but much of the structure is carried on the oak frame. Opening a new fireplace would not adversely affect the structural stability of the chimney. The front fireplace is connected to an existing flue which is still in working order and measures about 305mm square. During the removal of the 19thC fireplace it was discovered that there is another flue within the older chimney, behind the existing brick.

3.SOCIAL and ECONOMIC CONTEXT

3.1 The proposed alterations are internal and have no effect upon the exterior of the house or its party walls. The neighbours are not affected.

3.2 A meeting was held with Mr P. Jeffcoate of the W & H Planning Dept. on the 10th August, 2011 and the proposed opening of a new fireplace through to the existing one in the parlour, to accommodate a woodburning stove was discussed. The discussion took place over a preliminary copy of the fireplace drawing, H1993/03 and he took a copy with him. His advice was that the matter could be dealt with as a non-material development and a letter was then sent to the department with the relevant form and a fee of £25 to cover this application. (see copy attached). This was duly acknowledged on the 2nd September 2011. (see copy attached). In October, I telephoned Mr Jeffcoate and understood that the application was approved, I noted this on the notice, which is dated 23/10/11 by the 25th of October 2011. Tel: 01992 558664, email: david.kirby@w-h.gov.uk

October, the approval notice had not been received, I telephoned Mr Jeffcoate who advised me that it would be necessary to submit a Listed Building Application.

4. DESIGN

4.1 The ground floor rooms of the house are chilly owing to the glazed roof of the kitchen . It is not practical to add further radiators within the small rooms and the applicants wish to augment their heating with a woodburning stove warming both the dining room and parlour. Opening the existing fireplace through to the dining room will provide a suitable and attractive solution to the problem. The evidence of the earlier flue on the dining room side suggests there was a fireplace there before. In accordance with SPAB and other authorities, the back wall of the chimney could be reinstated, if, in the future, owners decided to return to separated rooms.

5.ACCESS

5.1. There is no change to existing access arrangements.

6.HERITAGE STATEMENT

6.1 The house has been subject to regular alteration throughout its existence. There is evidence that it was once a shop and workshop and part of the dining kitchen area was a back yard.A copy of the listing is attached. This makes no mention of the internal structure, which suggests the listing is primarily interested in its group value. The application has no effect upon this and , apart from the general duty of care in design, which has been exercised, PPG15 is hardly relevant.

7.CONCLUSION

7.1 The discussion with Mr. Jeffcoate led the applicants and myself to believe that this small alteration was an acceptable amendment to an approved design and we trust that this application, while necessary, will meet with an early approval.

D.C.Kirby

25.10.2011