

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING AT 30, HIGH STREET, REPTON, 12.30PM, 15TH JULY, 2020

Present:

Ben Swoyer, owner (BS)

James Bate, SDDC conservation officer (JB)

Philip Heath, heritage consultant (PH)

The meeting was arranged mainly to look at the potential for improving the kitchen facilities of the house.

PH began by outlining the sequence of development of the house. Late C18 house of two storeys and attics, two rooms on a floor, each side of the staircase. Three main phases of addition:

- a) Present dining room (formerly kitchen) ?c1810/20 with barrel vaulted cellar under and maid's room over, probably reached by a secondary staircase now removed;
- b) single-storey scullery or pantry/larder (Victorian) to west of former kitchen addition;
- c) Full height addition at south end of house, one room per floor, perhaps of c1900. The room over the former kitchen may have had its walls and roof built up higher around the same time.

Since then, maybe in the 1950s or thereabouts, west-facing windows have been added to the front rooms that have external west-facing walls.

PH explained that addition b) described above was the area of least significance in the building and in fact was of minimal significance and could be remodelled/extended without "harm" subject to design. He described the provisional proposal to rebuild the south elevation of this room 3 or 4 feet further south of the current line, but with the same eaves and ridge heights as existing. The north slope of the roof is concealed, so there could be scope for some top lighting subject to the architect's consideration.

JB thought this a reasonable proposal, and suggested that maybe the dining room could be taken out to the same line as well, and to four feet or possibly a little more. PH pointed out that extending the dining room would form an awkward junction with the rear lobby that connects the staircase hall and dining room, and further discussion of this possibility was not pursued. It was noted that the extent of the new extension to the kitchen might be dictated either by the profile of the western boundary wall, which dips down at an angle roughly where the new kitchen might come to, or by existing window positions in the west elevation of the house.

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Internally, BS wished for better circulation through the dining room and into the kitchen. PH pointed out that the dining room fireplace and chimneybreast were actually modern reconstructions, though doubtless in the place of earlier ones, and the modern construction could be seen by shining a torch up the chimney. The grate is an old one, but certainly not in situ and probably an import. The size of the original chimneybreast is not known; it may have been larger than the current one.

PH suggested that a new doorway could be made through the fireplace position, retaining the jambs, but discussion with JB moved things on to the suggestion of a wider opening spanning from the south wall of the dining room to a retained north jamb of the present fireplace. PH suggested that the present doorway from kitchen to dining room might then be blocked and converted to built-in shelves accessed from the dining room side. BS liked these ideas. It was noted by all present that by moving the access between kitchen and dining room to the south side, there was no need to cross the dining room diagonally and the room could be re-arranged to appear more spacious.

PH suggested that the double doors out of the dining room might be converted back to a window (as originally) and that double or triple-leaf folding/sliding doors could be introduced in the new south wall of the kitchen instead. They would give direct access on to the brightest and most useful part of the small garden, and much improve the liveability and circulation of the house.

There was brief discussion about the steps between the differing levels in the garden. JB noted their modern construction and was not concerned about amending or modifying them. The potential to neaten the rainwater goods and replace in cast iron was noted.

Finally, there was discussion about the entry / utility room at the south end of the house. BS wished to put a new floor in. JB/PH noted that the blue bricks lent character to the space, and although many were worn and broken, replacements were not difficult to source. It was suggested that it would be better to lift them, and relay above a screed/insulation, to the existing slight fall. This work could be included in the applications relating to the kitchen and any other proposed minor works. The need for minimal joints between the bricks (as existing), and to keep the shallow stone sink, was noted.

JB noted that applications were taking a long time to register and validate at the moment, and recommended double-checking that everything was present and correct to avoid the frustration of being told that applications were invalid several weeks after submission. Planning and LBC applications would be needed for this scheme.

Following JB's departure, BS and PH discussed what Darryn at BiDesign might be asked to work up as a preferred option. BS thought he was likely to favour the doors in the south end of the kitchen extension, and returning the dining room doors to a properly-detailed window as would have been there formerly, but needed to discuss with his wife.

P. E. H. 15/7/2020.