



Heritage Statement

**4790 – Alterations and remodelling
The Old Forge, Weobley HR4 8SG**

Revision A – TF – 08.07.2024

1. Introduction

This heritage statement has been prepared in support of a householder and listed building consent application concerning internal and external alterations at the following property:

The Old Forge, Back Lane, Weobley, Herefordshire HR4 8SG.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the RRA drawing set and all other documents submitted as part of this planning application.

2. Existing Context

The Old Forge was formally used, in part, as a tea room and gift shop, being converted solely into residential accommodation in 2015.

Planning application ref: P141658/F.

Evidence of the previous use remains - as will be outlined within the course of this supporting statement - and these proposals seek to remove these aspects in order to improve the residential accommodation for the occupants.

3. Listing Description

SO 4051 - 4151 WEOBLEY CP MILL BANK (wes side) 14/168 The Forge

20.2.53

GV II

House. Probably C16, extended early C18 with some mid-C19 and late C20 alterations. Timber-frame with rendered infill on a coursed rubble plinth under a tile roof. L-plan, rear C16 wing extends to south-west, C18 range to south-east, with a further wing, extending northwards from the latter range. Main stack to rear wall of south-east range. North-east front of two storeys with central projection of two storeys, gabled, a 2-light case- ment under a segmental head to each floor. Main range behind also of two storeys has two fixed windows to the right and a 2-light casement to left. Ground floor has a 2-light and a single-light casement to the left. Entrance in angle with projecting wing is half-glazed. To right the ground floor has a large lean-to roof over a C20 shop front with a panelled two-leaf door. Framing of C18 range is four rectangular panels high. (RCHM, 3, p 202, no 53).

Listing NGR: SO4021751482

4. The site



Fig. 1: The Old Forge within the village of Weobley

The Old Forge is located at the western edge of the village of Weobley, at the junction of Mill Bank with High Street. It therefore occupies a prominent position within the Weobley Conservation Area and contributes to the wider streetscape.

As the name suggests, the building was originally used as a forge but has most recently been used as a tea-room and gift shop, converted solely into residential accommodation in 2015.

The building is comprised of a large gabled form, running parallel with Mill Bank. A projecting brick gable reaches out to the lane, with a domestic porch on one side and a large lean-to roof on the other. Below this lean-to is a C20 shop frontage which acted as the primary entrance into the tea-room.

The building has historically been extended to the rear (west) of the plan, with additional gabled forms connecting into the primary timber-framed volume.



Fig. 2: Front elevation showing the shop frontage and projecting gable

5. The Proposals

At ground floor, proposals involve the removal of a number of C20 introductions such as the raised timber floor (Image 1) and modern timber framing (Image 2) within the shop area. An access between kitchen and dining area is proposed, reflecting the lower finished floor levels, with existing doorway between the two (Image 3) being blocked up. New flagstone flooring throughout the kitchen and porch will tie the two areas together a single space.

The current kitchen will be subdivided to form utility room and office space, with a historic doorway (Image 4) being reopened to provide access from the hallway. The projecting brickwork mantel over the range cooker (Image 5) will be removed to improve the layout of the utility interior.

The C20 shop frontage (Image 6) will be replaced by new timber framed glazing that will retain the character of the existing but improve the quality of the fenestration.

At first floor existing C20 partition walls forming the ensuite bathroom will be carefully removed (Image 7), as will the existing rooflight (Image 8). New internal partitions allow for a dressing area with new wardrobe joinery under the eaves and a larger ensuite, with the shower sited centrally within the plan to maximise the available headroom. This represents a more sympathetic use of the available volume.

The kitchen is to be relocated to the northern end of the plan, adjacent to the dining and living area and supporting a more open-plan style of living. An existing soil and vent pipe is in the south-west corner of the new kitchen, ensuring that new drainage runs can be accommodated without a significant impact on historic fabric.



Image 1 : Suspended timber floor



Image 2 : C20 timber framing



Image 3 : Existing doorway to be blocked



Image 4 : Historic doorway (R)



Image 5 : Brick mantel, kitchen



Image 6 : Existing shop frontage



Image 7 : Existing ensuite rooflight



Image 8 : Existing dressing room

6. Heritage Impact

As outlined above, these proposals seek to reverse many of the unsympathetic C20 alterations and improve the building, as well as the quality of space for the inhabitants.

Given the previous use of the building as a tea-room and gift shop, these C20 alterations were undertaken in part to introduce 'traditional' character however in most instances the quality of finish and design choices simply result in a pastiche of the buildings inherent qualities.

Where structural alterations are proposed – such as linking the dining room to the new kitchen – these facilitate working with the original levels of the building and allow the historic character to be uncovered.

Existing services mean that the relocation of the kitchen to the northern end of the plan can be facilitated without a significant impact on historic fabric, with an existing soil and vent pipe to the south-west corner of the room. Mechanical ventilation is proposed through the front elevation where existing timber cladding means a new ventilation grille can be introduced without the need to core drill through masonry walls. The vent grille will be at a high-level to reduce impact on the streetscape.

The replacement of the shop frontage is considered to have a positive impact on the principal elevation and the wider conservation area setting, with the existing C20 fenestration replaced by traditional timber frame profiles. An opening vent within the return allows for the kitchen to be naturally ventilated without impacting the streetscape.

In summary, the proposals are considered to have a positive impact on the building itself as well as its contribution to the wider village setting.