



Proposed Renovation

of

Avola House
16 Tarrant Street • Arundel
West Sussex • BN18 9DJ

Heritage Statement

June 2019

HERITAGE STATEMENT

AVOLA HOUSE, TARRANT STREET, ARUNDEL

Introduction

Avola House is a late 18th Century Grade II Listed Building located in the historic centre of Arundel, in West Sussex. The property is a semi-detached four-storey house on the North side of Tarrant Street - at the apex of Bakers Arms Hill. Evidence suggests that it fell into a state of disrepair in the 1960s and was significantly overhauled in the 1970s when it lost many of its original internal features. It was subsequently purchased in 1984 and change of use later granted for Architects' offices. In 1996 it was sold and planning permission granted for reversion to domestic occupation. Much of the earlier office layout however has been retained as well as the doors, partitions etc from when it was in commercial use. The new owners Mr and Mrs Hunt who have recently purchased the property have done so with the intention of carefully restoring its historic fabric and reinstating the interior in a manner sympathetic to its status as a Grade II Listed dwelling.

1.00 An Assessment of the Heritage Significance

1.01 The Formation of the Town of Arundel

There are traces of early Roman development in Arundel, however it developed mainly as a Saxon town referred to in the Domesday Book in 1086, by which time it had become a thriving market town and port, with a population of a few hundred. In 1243 Arundel Castle came to be owned by the Fitzalan Family and then at the end of the 16th century the castle and Earldom was passed to the Duke of Norfolk.

The Norfolk Estate was a prominent employer for many centuries not just within the town but the surrounding villages as well. During this time the town developed as a busy port with docks and wharves built along the river bank as well as a key market centre for the Arun valley.

During the English Civil War Arundel Castle changed hands three times but by the end of the war it had been severely damaged and reduced to a ruin. In 1787 its re-building was begun by Charles Howard 11th Duke of Norfolk and then re-structuring was again undertaken following a visit by Queen Victoria in 1846. This was masterminded by Henry Fitzalan Howard 14th Duke and completed by his son Henry Fitzalan Howard 15th Duke in 1900.

Between the Civil War and the mid 18th century Arundel was in a relatively poor state however it began to flourish again in the late 18th and early 19th century still as a busy market town and port with two breweries and a timber trade. Arundel Station was constructed in 1863. Gaslight was first seen in the town in 1838 and the new Catholic Cathedral was commissioned in 1868.

The town grew considerably throughout the 19th century until by 1901 it had a population of over 3000. Today the population is 3650.

1.02 Street Description

Tarrant Street lies within the Arundel Conservation Area which in total covers 500 buildings many of which are listed and many others of which are of historical or architectural interest.

A tithe map of c.1785 shows it known as Lower Lane and running parallel with Market Street which became Maltravers Street to the North and with the line of the River Arun to the South.

The architectural characteristics of Tarrant Street are richly varied and range from the 16th century timber framed building which turns the corner from the High Street to the building on the corner of School Lane which is shown on the tithe map as Newburgh Arms Inn with stables, yard and garden owned by George Constable and occupied in the 1840s by James Holmes Hopkins.

In between there are many notable buildings including the Old Candle Factory in Tarrant Square; the 19th century printing works which housed the West Sussex Gazette and South of England Advertiser and the Victoria Institute a stuccoed classical building built in 1846.

Listed dwellings include Walker House a three-storey terraced house built in the late 18th century and Tarrant House at No 42 a red brick two storey house with a noticeable ground floor porch with Tuscan pilasters and a 6-panelled door which records show was owned and occupied by Robert Watkins who became the Duke of Norfolk's agent. Adjoining No 42 is a terrace of three storied red brick houses Nos 44;46 and 48 which are believed to have been built between 1785 and 1788.

Avola House is flanked to the West by Sparks Yard which was constructed in the 1830's as an imposing brick built three-storey building with arcaded ground floor and established by Charles Sparks who was recorded in 1839's Kelly's Directory as a carpenter and furniture broker. At some stage Frederick Sparks entered into a partnership with Edward Gill and this lasted until 1930. By the mid 1950's advertising emphasized the business activities of Sparks and Sons as House Agents, Auctioneers, Surveyors and Valuers right up until 1963 when trading would appear to have ceased.

No 16a would appear to have been built as the coach house to Avola House to the South-West and faces straight onto the street to Tarrant Street. This building is constructed in flintwork with brick coursing and large ground floor arched openings. The first-floor accommodation is set under a slate roof.

To the East of Avola House -on the opposite side of Bakers Arms Hill is Walker House a three-storey terraced house also built in the late 18th century and to the North is No 6 Bakers Arms Hill a timber framed cottage.

1.03 Avola House, Tarrant Street-Listing Status

Listing Text

1.
5401 TARRANT STREET
(North Side)

No 16
(Avola House)
TQ 0107 1/61 26.3.49.

II

2.

Late C18 [not marked on 1785 map]. Red brick. South elevation rendered. Hipped tile roof. Red and grey brick chimneys.

2 storeys and attics. Plain stringcourse at eaves level, with parapet masking roof. South elevation has 3 double-hung sash windows with glazing bars on 1st floor, and 2 on ground floor, flanking porch with ogival lead roof taken on 3-centred arch with wooden keystone to front, and straight entablatures to sides, supported by Tuscan columns and pilasters.

Attic dormers have casements with glazing bars.

East elevation has eaves cornice with cyma reversa modillions, 1 range of blocked windows, 2 double-hung sash windows with glazing bars on 1st floor, 1 triple-hung sash window with no glazing bars on ground floor, and 1 6-panelled door, partly glazed, in moulded frame with 5 brick steps (3 treads of Bognor Rock, 1 of limestone) arched over gutter. 1 planked cellar door with segmental head framed by semi-circular relieving arch of grey headers. Terraced garden to south, flanked by brick retaining wall with ramping top. Planked door in east wall, leading to vaulted cellar underneath terrace.

Listing NGR: TQ0169407043

1.04 The Historical Development of the Dwelling

Although Avola House does not appear on the 1785 Map of Arundel -the land at this stage is designated as orchard-it is generally believed to have been constructed in the late 1780s or early 1790s. There is little left internally to assist with dating although the two shutters on the ground floor are clearly historic and similar to those hanging in No 44 Tarrant Street. The security bar on one has a release mechanism very similar to the hardware at No 44-a property believed to have been constructed as one of a terrace of three between 1785 and 1788. Likewise, the staircase has similarities both with No 44 and No 34 High Street -the latter a 17th century property which was believed to have been “Georganized” in the late 18th century. There is evidence in the Basement of a medieval beam but as often happened these timbers were frequently reused from older properties or ships so not necessarily contemporaneous with the building.

The measured survey reveals that the central wall separating the two front rooms from those to the rear is as thick as the external walls thus suggesting that that the building began as a one-room deep plan. This could mean that the Garden Room was constructed later as an infill within what could have been a back yard a theory reinforced by the fact that a well originally formed an internal feature in this room until it was capped and covered over during the works undertaken in the 1980s. This arrangement would have meant that a North facing window could have featured in the opening now occupied by the bi-fold doors.

A rather puzzling feature are the two infill panels of brick on the front face of the property. The location would suggest that at some time there were two bay windows in place of the current ground and first floor sliding sash windows. Bay windows were often fashionable

features added by the Victorians and Edwardians. That being the case though it is evident that they must have been taken out again relatively soon after they were formed. A photo taken in 1969-1970 shows the building derelict with an aged rendered façade.

Another possibility is that when the render was removed in the 1970s it could have resulted in damaged brickwork which led to the more recent infill bricks. Either way the change in brickwork is quite pronounced.

On the East elevation there are a further three window openings which have been infilled -2 being ground and first floor windows and the third a smaller window adjacent to the side door which could have been a pantry. On first impression these would appear to have been features of the window tax which was raised at intervals throughout the 18th and 19th century until it was finally repealed on health grounds in 1851 however on closer inspection the brickwork would appear to have stained by smoke from the flue of the fireplaces rising up on the inside of wall behind and therefore the recesses were possibly introduced as a decorative feature.

1.05 Architectural Assets-External Features

Generally, the format of the front façade would appear to be intact in its symmetrical arrangement with 2 dormer windows at attic level; 3 double hung sash windows at second floor level and 2 at ground floor level-albeit all with replacement joinery.

The front door features as an elegant flanking porch supported upon Tuscan columns and pilasters similar to that at No 42 Tarrant Street. The ogival lead roof is taken from a 3-centred arch with a wooden keystone to the front and straight entablatures to the sides. The imposing frontage is enhanced by the manner in which it is situated at an elevated level and approached via a flight of 20 stone steps with terraced gardens on either side which leads up from Tarrant Street.

The West elevation -which although greatly altered faces onto an elegant walled garden which benefits from its sunny, sheltered situation.

The East elevation -which has less significant alterations although again none of the originally joinery features an eaves cornice in brickwork and cyma reversa modillions. An arched opening to the basement has a semi-circular relieving arch of grey headers.

1.06 Architectural Assets-Internal Features

Unfortunately, most of the internal features have been lost other than the following:

a) Staircase

The staircase comprises an elegant open well flight of stairs with an open string which rises up through three storeys of the house. The handrail is a simple curved top handrail which is most likely to be hardwood under its painted finish with square stick balusters periodically strengthened with metal sticks. A modern staircase leads from the hall down to the cellar.

b) Window Shutters and Shutter Boxes

The ground floor windows to the Tarrant Street elevation are fitted with shutters which fold back into the recess within the window reveals. Those in the Living Room in the closed

position can be secured with a swivel shutter bar which is released with a push button mechanism.

c) Timber Structure

There is evidence of a historic beam spanning North to South in the Basement. As previously this stated this would appear to have been originally a ship's timber and not therefore contemporaneous with the house.

d) Undercroft

An undercroft with a vaulted brick ceiling spans the length of the front elevation. This would appear to be an original store although its exact function is unclear.

e) Fireplaces

The original fireplace surrounds have been removed to the Living Room and Bedroom 4 have been removed and the chimney breasts blocked up. The chimney breast in the kitchen has been removed and the structure replaced with blockwork. A brick arched range fireplace features in the kitchen which could well have incorporated a bread oven.

2.00 Assessment of Impact

2.01 Statement of Impact of the Proposed Works

The purpose of the scheduled programme of renovation is primarily to retain and restore the original fabric of the building and its fixtures and features. Importantly also is the desire to return the building to its historic purpose as a family home having been occupied for many years as commercial offices. Although much of the historic interior was removed during the 1970s the fittings which were installed during its conversion to offices are commercial in design. The proposal is therefore to replace these with fittings of a more domestic nature and appropriate to the style of the building.

The following items of work are therefore considered **essential** in order to conserve and protect the original fabric and structure:

- a) Areas of both the clay tiled pitched roof and flat roof as well as the concealed parapet and valley gutters have been found defective and in order to prevent imminent degradation will require remedial action. The pitched roof coverings are clay tiled and although many of the tiles are intact a number of the broken and missing ones will require replacement with identical tiles. This also applies to the ridge and hip tiles. The proposal is to remove the existing mineralized felt roofing covering from the sizable area of flat roof which is believed to have been constructed in the 1970s and to replace this with Sarnafil-a single ply membrane which is designed to give the appearance of traditional leadwork with its wood cored rolls. All flashings; upstands and concealed gutters are to be cleared and relined in traditional lead work.

- b) The two existing dormer windows to the front elevation are seriously decayed both in terms of the structural timber and the casement joinery. The proposal is therefore to replace the timber framing; the casement windows; dormer cheeks and roof covering. The joinery will be in painted hardwood and the cheeks and roof covering in traditional leadwork with lead cored rolls.
- c) The rendered face to the West Elevation is badly cracked and the painted finish discoloured. There is evidence of damp penetration on the inner face of the wall which is damaging the internal finishes. The proposal is therefore to remove the defective render which will allow the wall to breathe naturally and to expose the original brickwork on this elevation. In addition to repoint the existing brick joints in natural lime mortar and at the same time repair areas of defective pointing on both the front and East elevation with particular regard to the parapet brickwork.
- d) The upvc rainwater downpipes are in poor condition and sagging and therefore the proposal is to remove these and replace with painted cast iron sections.
- e) The modern feature window to the West elevation at First Floor level has panes of glass which have failed and misted. The proposal is to therefore replace them with a pair of sliding sash windows in painted hardwood arranged either side of a central mullion which will relate in styling to the sliding sash windows elsewhere.
- f) The double-glazed timber conservatory on the West elevation which achieved planning consent in 2001 also has panes of glass both on the sides and to the roof which have failed and misted. The conservatory is therefore to be replaced with a structure with reduced glazing in the roof in order to avoid the current effects of solar gain as well as bespoke sealed double-glazed casements in painted hardwood.
- g) Rewiring for safety and fire risk purposes is necessary and is to be carried out to meet current electrical standards together with the removal of the electrical meters installed for commercial occupancy purposes. Smoke detectors are required to be installed in specified locations.
- h) The existing coniferous trees which were part of a 1980s landscaping scheme are currently causing extensive root damage to the front garden steps and retaining walls either side. These two trees are therefore to be removed and the garden steps and external walls rebuilt re-using the existing materials and where necessary new materials to match. All pointing is to be carried out in traditional lime mortar. The brick terrace will require repair to the edge and replacement of existing bricks with matching ones where damaged.

2.02 Proposed Mitigation Strategy

As previously stated - with the objective in mind of repairing the fabric of the original building and therefore ensuring the longevity of the heritage asset- the application also encompasses the desire to return the building to its original usage as a domestic residence with the comfort of its inhabitants in mind. In the course of this exercise lies the

opportunity to enhance the heritage asset and thus its status within the townscape. These measures therefore include the following:

- a) The re-placement of the Second Floor upvc roof lantern with a more traditional styled skylight with clear solar reflective glazing and opening panels designed to reduce the effects of solar gain.
- b) The removal of the modern spiral staircase leading from the mezzanine level created in the 1980s and the extension of the first floor across the double height space in order to create a bedroom.
- c) The introduction of 2 No light tunnels from the roof in order to bring natural light down to the First-floor circulation space.
- d) The removal of areas of studwork boarding introduced to conceal the chimney breasts together with the blockwork walling to the base of the Kitchen chimney breast. Introduction of a high-level steel section in order to provide a more structurally sound solution to the support of the chimney stack.
- e) The introduction of stone fireplace surrounds to the living room and bedroom 4.
- f) The removal of the modern, commercial style skirting boards; partition walls and modern cornicing; engineered timber flooring and full height doorsets; and replacement with 220mm moulded skirtings; solid timber flooring over varying widths; window shutters and shutter boxes; dado rails; plaster cornicing and 6-panelled painted solid timber doors.
- g) The restoration and strengthening of the original staircase including the French polishing of the original hardwood hand rail and repainting the balusters.
- h) The re-introduction of the front door as the main entrance and the reconstruction of the damaged external steps and the creation of a refuge at street level to allow for safe access from Tarrant Street. This is to be achieved by the setting out of the first two treads in order to gain an additional 600mm which also allows for the gate to swing in both directions.
- i) Reinstatement of a bespoke kitchen and utility space with handmade cabinetry
- j) Opening up of all original fireplaces where feasible and the installation of surrounds sympathetic to the design of the original ground floor fireplace surrounds.

3.00 Justification and Heritage Benefits

3.01 Observations and Records

As described at the beginning of this statement the life span of Avola House spans significant changes in the social, commercial and architectural history of Arundel.

A measured survey of the property has been carried out in order to provide an accurate record of the building and its garden. The existing fixtures and fittings have also been examined and recorded.

3.02 Essential Repairs

The proposed programme of renovation work will not only protect the fabric of the building from further and inevitable degradation but also ensure its longevity for the benefit of future generations. The schedule of essential repairs has been carefully defined and wherever possible traditional construction materials have been specified.

3.03 Minimised Intervention and Mitigation

It should be noted that there are no proposed changes to the historic footprint of the property and that changes made to the internal arrangement of rooms are designed to reflect the historic plan form.

Victoria Holland RIBA
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