

**The existing 18c staircase.**

(to be read in conjunction with drawing N° 2014211403/21 & 22 revB Skeletal 3d drwg)  
(existing staircase, photos and plans)

The original staircase is of very simple construction, with a central structural newel post running from the ground to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. This has horizontal structural timbers radiating to form supports for the head and foot of alternate flights. These structural timbers are notched into the main newel (not rebated).

Quarter cut timber carriages (2n° per straight flight) carry the treads and risers (formed with triangular fillets sitting on both carriages). Both the carriages and fillets are nailed (only) to the structure. There are no joints other than butt joints.

The treads and risers are again butt jointed and nailed to each other and the fillets.

1½-inch stringers are then butted against the treads/risers and nailed (with 2" flat nails). The stringers are then 'notched' into the central newel.

The soffit was originally finished with horsehair lime plaster on lathes. Only areas under the kites on each floor still remain as lime plaster. The underside of the straight flights has been replaced with plasterboard (probably after the 1960's fire).

Basically the complete staircase is but jointed and nailed together excepting the notched joints into the 3 ½ "central newel.

**Condition of the present staircase**

(to be read in conjunction with drawing N° 2014211403/21 & 22 revB)

The treads and risers have been overlaid with pine wood (the original damaged timber treads remains below each surface tread, but are burnt, in part, split or incomplete. The overlaid timber has been added to the stairs so as to strengthen the original stairs and match up with the raised 'over laid' flooring, to each floor.

Additional timbers have been added sporadically to replace previously failed or degraded timber structure.

The treads and risers have been over clad in pine and the nose now extend beyond the stringers in the majority.

Four stringers have been burnt to a depth past the point of repair and we are proposing to replace these stringers, notching them into the central newel post as the original (re-using the notches in the vertical newel).

All the original spindles, string capping and handrails forming the banisters are either missing or burnt beyond repair. We have been able to salvage sufficient information to replicate these timbers with matching timber sections in pine.

The handrail we would like to replace in hardwood (we believe the original was hardwood, probably oak). Again these were nailed into the central newel and the leading newel at the bottom and top of each flight.

**Proposals**

We propose to dismantle the overlaid timber treads and risers, inspecting the original treads, where they have survived, complete installation of any additional noggins or batons as required, to strengthen and stabilize the staircase. Reinstate the overlaid treads and risers. We will need to replace 4 internal strings (with matching pine to the same section), as the original strings are burnt beyond repair.

The original ¼ cut carriages' that have been exposed have been generally in good condition although some of the nailed joints have opened and will need some additional support.

The outer strings are in serviceable condition and will be left in position (to maintain the original tread and riser positions. The final outer string from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> floors has previously been removed. We will be reinstating the string on its original line.

We intend to reinstating the correct (matching the original) sections for the handrail, spindles, string cappings' and leading newel posts along with decorative beading evident under the string capping on the internal strings only.

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We intend to cleaning up each of the treads and risers (maintaining all signs of wear) and leaving them stained and polished.

We intend to reinstate the handrail, as the original sections (taken from the burnt sections remaining). This will be finished with stain and polish.

The matching spindles and strings will be painted white (in chalk paint).

The height of the handrail and the spacing's of the spindles will be as existing (The handrail is lower than today's regulations and the spindles (balusters) are spaced apart greater than the standard 4" spacing's).

The curved soffits to the staircase will be reinstated with timber lathes and horsehair lime plaster. It is intended to maintain as much of the original lathe and lime plaster finish as possible.

The overall affect will be that the original 18c simple staircase will remain intact with only banisters being replicated as the original staircase (along with 4 internal strings). The treads will remain in their existing position with the original 18c structure below.

### **Rear staircase windows**

The windows (frames and sashes) will remain as existing, with additional draft proofing and re-decoration only.

### **1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor rear vertical sliding sashes**

The windows are **not** to be replaced. The second floor window is to be refurbished only replacing parting beads, cords and weights where required and then redecorated.

The vertical sliding sash window on the first floor is to have the four pane **sashes ONLY**, replaced with six over six paned single glazed sashes, the existing box frames will remain in position and be refurbished followed by all being decorated.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> floor obscured bathroom window.**

The original frame is to be left intact with an infill top hung frame inserted within the existing with two top hung opening sashes and obscured glazing.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Floor room partition**

It was agreed that the remaining partition splitting up the 1<sup>st</sup> floor into two rooms, was not original and had been constructed in the 60's. This principle was further reinforced because the floor joists under this partition (running front to back), and spanning between the original timber besmears/beams in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, floor structure have been renewed (again during the 60's), running midway laterally in the principle room and the rear room.

This did not mean that there was never a partition separating the front from the rear, but did leave the possibility that it might have been one principle room on that floor.

We requested that we might install a large double door opening in the remaining partition between the two rooms (from a single door opening to a pair of doors). As shown highlighted on drwg 2014211403/21A

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**Cornice on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor**

As shown, but question, how to pick up variance in existing depths (of coving) where the ceiling has dropped significantly. Consider the possibility of leaving one section of coving out so that the different depths don't meet (drwgs 2014211403/2)

Cornice on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Will the conservation officer allow a subservient cornice in the principle main room of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor? (drwgs 2014211403/2)

Horizontal wall panelling above the dado on the first floor principle room

The bloom of scorch/ burnt timber to be replaced with matching Victorian pine horizontal boarding.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Dale', written in a cursive style.

**MARTIN DALE      B.A (HONS) DIP. Arch. RIBA**  
FOR & ON BEHALF OF *MD DESIGN ASSOCIA*