

JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT FOR REPAIR/REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING VERANDA

DR G RICKS, 14 VICTORIA PLACE, MONMOUTH. Application No: DC/2011/962

Description of existing veranda

14 Victoria Place is a semi-detached Grade II listed building, forming part of a group of similar buildings dating from the early C19 in this part of the Conservation Area. It may have been designed and built by the noted local architect GV Maddox, who lived in nearby Monk Street, when Priory Street was first laid out in the late 1830s. The construction of Victoria Place (c1839) coincided with the accession of Queen Victoria, which probably explains its name.

The veranda lies on the west-facing aspect of the building (Picture 1), overlooking the garden and the Vauxhall Fields beyond. Its roof is the only part that can be clearly seen from Priory Street, because of the 2m high stone garden wall that runs alongside the pavement (Picture 2).

The veranda forms an integral part of the structure of the house and would have been present when the building was listed in August 1974. The floor is tiled with original Victorian tiles, there are 5 steps leading down to the garden and the veranda covers cellars beneath. The existing veranda is constructed of white painted timber and consists of four principal components (Picture 1):

1. Six lattice uprights;
2. Frieze;
3. Balustrade; and
4. Hipped roof with wired glass and cast iron gutter.

The current veranda is not contemporary with the construction of Victoria Place (c 1839), but is presumably a replacement of earlier structures. The lattice uprights and frieze, which incorporates 'sunburst' spandrels, are the oldest components and reflect the style of the early part of the 20th Century. They are the most architecturally important components of the veranda.

In comparison, the roof and balustrade are quite recent. The roof possibly dates from the 1960s or 1970s, but the balustrade is a later addition, perhaps from the 1970s or even the 1980s. An undated photograph (which may date from the 1970s) shows the veranda without the balustrade (Picture 3) and shrubs protect the drop into the garden. The roof structure is straightforward and purely functional, but the fretwork design of the balustrade is of no great architectural merit and does not complement the more elegant lattice of the uprights or the 'sunburst' spandrels.

Softwood replacement of missing elements in the lattice uprights, the frieze and the balustrade was made in the mid-1990s, but there is also evidence of earlier repairs to the lattice uprights (probably undertaken when the balustrade was added). In all these repairs the dimensions of the replacement softwood is not exactly the same as those of the original wood, which affects the overall appearance of the structure (Picture 4). All timber now shows evidence of deterioration and the feet of the iron supports that strengthen the lattice uprights also exhibit some decay (Pictures 5 & 6). Extensive replacement of defective timber and strengthening the iron supports is needed to safeguard the structure of the veranda. Some panels of the wired glass are cracked and overall the glass is discoloured and opaque and must also be replaced.

Proposed repair and replacement of the veranda

The overall intention is to repair or replace all defective timber elements in the veranda, whilst retaining the earlier features of architectural value. The durable hardwood, sapele, will be used throughout, and painted with 3 coats of microporous white paint to match the existing structure. The cast iron elements (supports for lattice upright, gutter and down pipe) will be repaired or replaced as necessary before reuse, and also painted white.

The proposed design consists of the following components:

1. Lattice uprights. All defective wood will be repaired or replaced with sapele hardwood to copy the existing lattice pattern and maintain the existing dimensions. The feet of the cast iron supports will be repaired and the supports reused.

2. Frieze. All defective wood will be repaired or replaced with sapele hardwood to copy the existing arrangement of horizontal and curved elements and the 'sunburst' spandrels. The existing dimensions will be maintained.

3. Balustrade. The existing softwood balustrade will be removed and replaced with a simpler hardwood balustrade consisting of handrail and vertical elements (Picture 7). The simplicity of this design will complement and emphasise the elegant lattice structure of the uprights and the curves of the frieze and spandrels.

4. Roof. The existing softwood roof will be removed and replaced with a similar structure constructed from sapele and incorporate the capex system to prevent leaks. The wired glass will be replaced with panels of 4mm toughened glass (Pilkington Activ in the neutral shade). New lead flashing will be used where the veranda roof meets the wall of the house. The existing cast iron gutter will be repaired (if feasible) or replaced with an extruded aluminium gutter of similar cross section.

As a result, the features of most architectural merit (the lattice uprights, frieze and spandrels) will be retained and visually enhanced by the simplicity of the proposed new balustrade. The use of durable hardwood, together with modern exterior paint systems and toughened glass, will ensure the long-term integrity of the structure.

Dr Geoff Ricks

20th October 2011