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Professional Archaeological Services

7A Richmond Hill Avenue, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1BG

Author: Sam Driscoll, BA (Hons), MA, MCIfA

Client: Mr S Woodlock

Project: Heritage Impact Assessment & Statement of Significance

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Heritage Planning Services Ltd

53 Marshfield Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1JS

Sam Driscoll (m) 07825 550271 (e) sam@heritageplan.co.uk

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1. Heritage Planning Services Limited has been commissioned by Mr S Woodlock to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment and Statement of Significance for 7A Richmond Hill Avenue, Bristol, BS8 1BG, which is situated within the curtilage of the Grade II listed 7 Richmond Hill Avenue.
- 1.2. Planning permission is being sought for the conversion of the above property to a two storey, three bed dwelling, with Living Room, Study, Kitchen, Dining Room and Bedroom on the Ground Floor. The first floor will comprise an extension to the northeast to allow for two additional bedrooms and a bathroom on the upper level. The existing footprint of the building will remain the same.
- 1.3. A recent application (18/01518/H) was refused, partly due to concerns over the intensification of development within the curtilage of the Grade II 7 Richmond Hill Avenue. Further information with regards to the setting and significance of the heritage asset was deemed necessary.
- 1.4. All recording was completed by Sam Driscoll BA (Hons), MA, MCIfA, Director, Heritage Planning Services Limited. The Project was completed under HPS project reference HPS-277/18.

The Project Site

- 1.5. The Project Site is located within the Bristol suburb of Clifton, 1km northwest of the City Centre and within the Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area (Character Area 5 - Victoria Square & Queens Road). The Project Site is situated centrally within Conservation Area 5 and comprises a typical example of a Regency Style Villa with a well preserved converted Victorian Coach House and Stable in the new Tudor style to the rear. A modern single storey extension has been added to the northeast of the Coach House (centred on NGR ST 57569 73238).
- 1.6. By the mid 19th century Clifton and Hotwells had evolved from a largely rural community to a thriving area favoured by wealthy professionals living in large houses. The transition was spurred on by the desire to move out of the City of Bristol which had become overcrowded and polluted (Bristol City Council 2010: 9). The Project Site was developed in the high point of this expansion and epitomises the character of the Conservation Area.

1.7. Richmond Hill Avenue and Wetherell Place to the south are set apart from the surrounding roads by design. For example, Frederick Place and Meridian Place to the east, Buckingham Place to the west and Richmond Terrace to the south are characterised by densely packed three to four storey terraced properties. In contrast the Project Site is set within an area of semidetached villas and cottages with wide driveways leading to formal gardens, which incorporated a sense of openness and greenery into the piecemeal development. This contrast is an important aspect of the Conservation Area, which seeks to preserve the sense of openness within the highly developed suburb of Bristol.



Figure 1 Detailed location of Project Site, outlined in red.

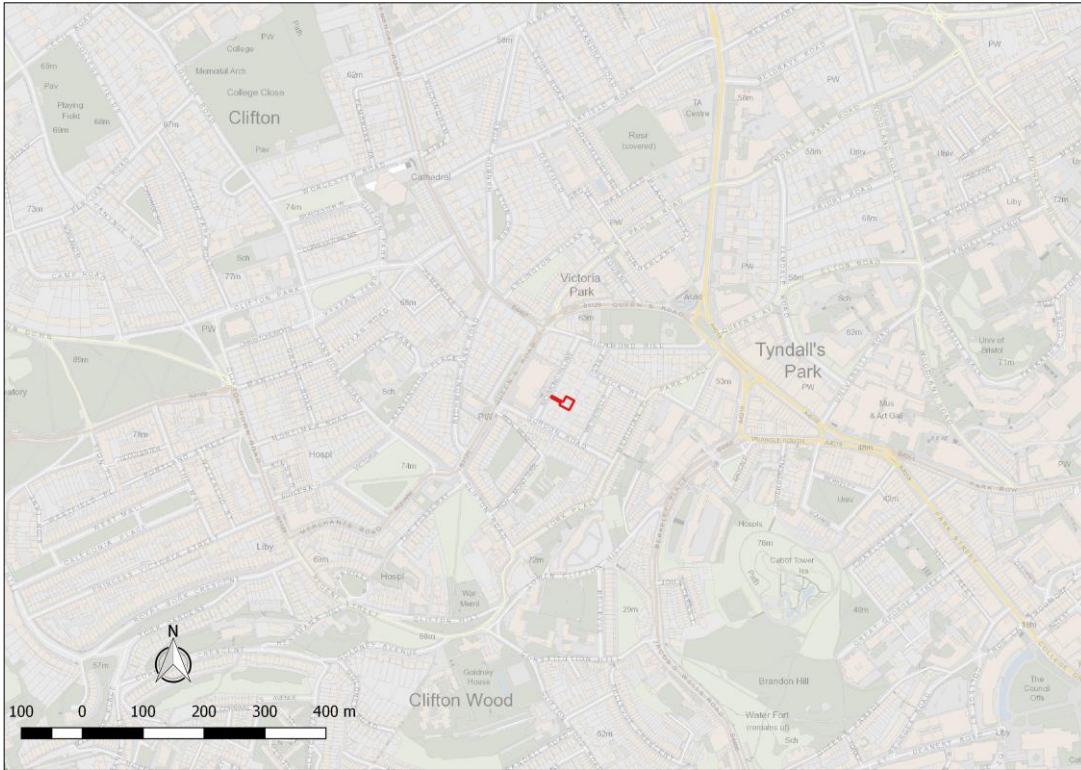


Figure 2 General location of Project Site, outlined in red.

1.8. Number 7 Richmond Hill Avenue shares a Grade II listing with the attached property to the north (No 5).

1.8.1. Historic England List Entry (UID: 380352)- NUMBERS 5 AND 7 AND ATTACHED GARDEN WALLS AND PIERS. Pair of attached houses. Early-mid C19. Render with limestone dressings, brick party wall stacks, roof not visible. Double-depth plan. Neoclassical style. Each of 3 storeys and basement; 3-window range. A symmetrical front has 1-window entrance blocks set back at each end and 4-window centre, with giant pilasters to a moulded coping and low parapet. The side blocks have plain surrounds to 6-panel doors, and semicircular-arched windows. First-floor windows have overlights with margin panes, French windows with a tented timber balcony to No.5 with wrought-iron pointed-arched railings with quatrefoils, and 6/6-pane sashes. INTERIOR not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached rubble front garden walls and 2 pairs of rusticated piers.

1.9. The Project Site includes 7a Richmond Hill Avenue, a former Victorian Coach House and Stable with modern extension, set to the rear (southeast) of 7 Richmond Hill Avenue. Access is gained via the original driveway to the south of the property. To the front of the Coach House, the yard has been converted to allow a small area for parking. A covered lean-to extends from the Coach House to the garden wall (to the northeast), supported by the single storey northwest elevation of the modern

extension, before returning to the northwest to meet the rear of 7 Richmond Hill Avenue at ground floor level. Here an external stair leads down to the basement.



Photo 1 Southeast facing view of driveway leading to 7A Richmond Hill Avenue (Project Site)



Photo 2 Section of lean-to extending from the single storey modern extension to 7 Richmond Hill Avenue (NNE facing view)



Photo 3 SSE facing view of lean to abutting the Coach House.

1.10. A high garden wall is evident to the east and south of the Coach House. The wall predates the Coach House and is probably original to the property.



Photo 4 Southwest facing view of garden wall predating 1889.

1.11. The historic Coach House is L shaped in plan, with complex hipped roof incorporating decorative dormers on the northeast and northwest elevations. The timber roof is finished with slate and period style crested ridge tiles and spire finials. The current plan disguises the original layout, which incorporated an open yard to the northwest, defined by a dwarf wall and trellis (Blacker Original 1889 Building Plan BRO ref BUILDING PLAN/Vol 24/ 12a). This has since been enclosed with a mono pitch roof, creating a single storey single bay, currently in use as a Study. The chamfered corner to the northwest preserves the original plan.



Photo 5 Southeast facing view of the Coach House from driveway. Enclosed courtyard with mono pitch roof is evident to the left.



Photo 6 SSE facing view of Coach House from yard / parking bay. The timber framed hayloft dormer and pitched ventilation add to the decorative effect.



Figure 3 Original building plan for the proposed Stable dated 1889, commissioned by Dr A E Blacker, Ground Floor showing Coach House, yard and harness room. (BRO ref BUILDING PLAN/Vol 24/ 12a)

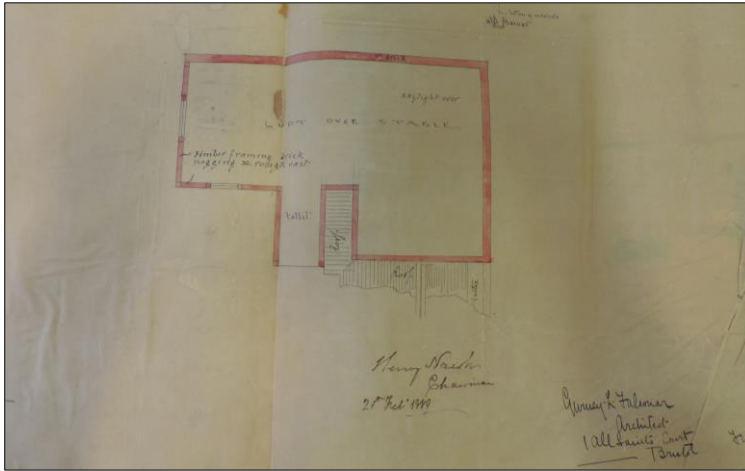


Figure 4 Original building plan for the proposed Stable dated 1889, commissioned by Dr A E Blacker, loft over Stable. (BRO ref BUILDING PLAN/Vol 24/ 12a)

- 1.12. At ground floor level the historic core is constructed in brick and the original Stable and Coach House floors are recorded as having been laid with a mixture of concrete and Stable brick. The southeast and southwest walls, which are not visible from the main house (7 Richmond Hill Avenue) are constructed of red brick in common bond with parapet. The northwest and northeast elevations are constructed in a timber frame (now painted black) with brick noggin and roughcast finish, painted white.
- 1.13. A modern single storey extension links the Coach House to the northeast garden wall. The north-western elevation comprises two full length, double sliding glass doors leading out into the courtyard / carpark. Internally the ground floor of the former Coach House has been divided into four bays. Entrance is now gained via a new door leading from the carpark into a corridor within the modern extension, with link door through to the historic Coach House to the right. Here a wide doorway leads to a corridor area / porch. The floor here comprises a harlequin tile design bordered by a brick step. This design doesn't appear to fit with the historic plans which show no entrance in this area of the building, which was originally planned to house a WC. Similarly, the design and materials do not appear contemporary with the modern renovation. Therefore, it is suggested that the original plans may have been altered or that alterations were made in the early 20th century. The wide doorframe and historic door may suggest that the feature was reclaimed from the location of the Harness Room or elsewhere, favouring the suggestion that the floor and entrance are a later addition.



Photo 7 Wide door leading from modern extension to converted Coach House in the region of the WC on the 1889 plan.

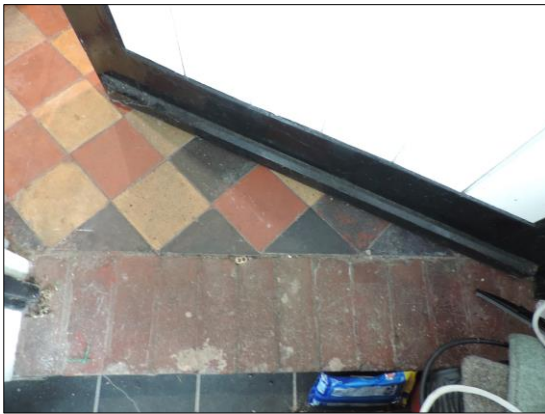


Photo 8 Detail of brick curbing and harlequin floor.

1.14. The former Coach House and Stable are now in use as a recording studio, with sound proofed 'live room' and control room occupying the majority of the space. The live room is accessed via the Study, with a new two door system created by enclosing and reforming the original Coach House and Harness Room entrances. To the northwest, the partition for the original harness room has been removed.



Photo 9 View of modern housing for two door system leading from the Study to the live room. The alterations enclose the original Harness Room and Coach House entrances (west facing view).

- 1.15. The remainder of the Stable has been partitioned to provide a shower room and new stair to the converted loft space.
- 1.16. The new extension is divided into three bays providing a Bedroom, Living Room and Galley Kitchen.
- 1.17. The First Floor (former Hay Loft) provides an open plan living space. The upper floor is constructed in a timber frame with brick noggin, with roughcast.



Photo 10 Converted loft space. Southwest facing view with original skylight location visible to the rear left of the shot.

2. Historic Development of the Project Site

- 2.1. The Project Site was first developed between 1803 and the publication of the Ashmead Map in 1828. The Ashmead map gives a detailed layout of the newly developed site but does not document the name of the road. It is notable that developments to the south and east of the site comprise rows of planned terraced housing, whilst the road fronting the Project Site is occupied by semidetached cottages and villas, probably each privately developed with no agreement reached at this time on the name of the road.



Figure 5 Ashmead Map 1828. Project Site outlined in red (Source Know Your Place Bristol)

- 2.2. By 1828 the Project Site was occupied by Fairlee Cottage, a semidetached property mirroring the plan of Burnell Cottage (attached to the north). The building is shown as L shaped in plan.
- 2.3. Wetherell Place to the southeast is not shown on the map, however the plot appears to have been laid out, suggesting that it may have been under development at the time of the survey for the Ashmead map.
- 2.4. By the publication of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1844 – 1888) Richmond Hill Avenue was known as Richmond Spring Road. Wetherell Place had been developed to the southeast, with a similar arrangement of semidetached properties with gardens bordering those belonging to Richmond Spring Road, to the northwest.

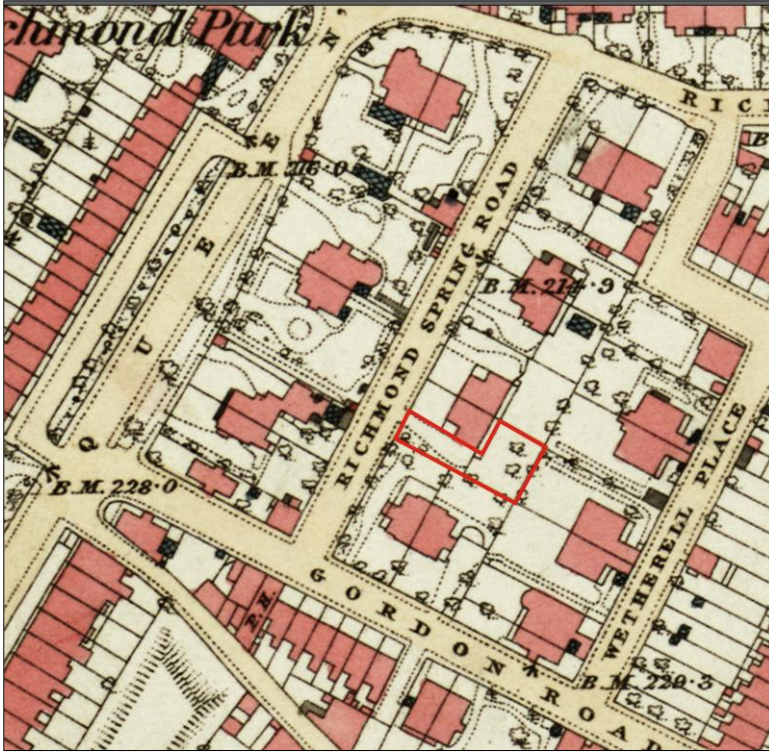


Figure 6 1844 – 1888 OS First Edition, Project Site outlined in red (Source Know Your Place Bristol)

- 2.5. The Project Site was still occupied by a single dwelling, with annex marked to the northwest indicating the area of the single storey porch which is evident today. The Town Plan of similar date (1879-1888) gives further detail showing a path heading towards the annex, suggesting that it was complete by this date and formed the main entrance. The driveway is shown in its current location, with a line of trees leading around to the basement steps to the rear. A formal garden is laid out to the rear with paved border and two mature trees. Access to the open basement is shown to the rear, with steps descending to the southwest of the building, as opposed to the northeast as they are today.
- 2.6. The site boundary was clearly defined at this time, with land belonging to Fairlee Cottage and neighbouring properties divided into rectangular plots.



Figure 7 1879 – 1888 Town Plan, Project Site outlined in red (Source Know Your Place Bristol)

2.7. Between 1851 and 1881 census records show that the Fairlee was named 'villa' as opposed to 'cottage' as recorded by the cartographic resources. Occupants are recorded as follows-

- 1851 Henry Astley, Daughter, Visitor and two Servants: Occupation Vicar East Barsham Norfolk
- 1861 Edward Bush, Family, two Servants: Engineer
- 1871 S Samuel, Family, two Servants: Retired Solicitor
- 1881 Elizabeth Edwards (Railway Debenture), Son (Servant / Cook)

2.8. In 1889 plans for a Proposed Stable Block¹ were submitted by Dr A. E. Blacker² (General Medical Practitioner) for Fairlee Villa, with the modern-day address of Richmond Hill Avenue, indicating that the road name had been changed. The planned new Coach House had a stable with four stalls to the rear, Coach House to the front and open yard to the southwest corner. A hay loft was constructed over the Stable block to the rear and has been described in the preceding section. Plans indicate the location of an 'old wall' to the rear of the structure with formed the southeast boundary. According to the plans the two storey brick supporting wall to the rear of the Stable block is bedded on the

¹ Architect Gurney Lindoe Falconar b. 1855. Manufacturer of Wrights Patent Fixing Blocks (concrete blocks) and architect (Census Transcript Household London 1891 & Essex 1911 Census). Also built a cottage in the garden of the Blacker family home, the Old Vicarage, Midsomer Norton for Dr Ernest Blacker, Arthur's brother.

² 1891 Census Record: Dr Arthur Edward Blacker b. 1857 Age 34. Lived in Fairlee with Wife, Harriet, two daughters and two servants. Both Arthur and his brother Ernest followed their father into the medical profession.

footing and built up against the northwest elevation of the 'old wall'. It is likely that the access to the basement of Fairlee Villa was altered at this time and that the corner of the Coach House yard was chamfered to afford better access to the service entrance.

- 2.9. By 1903 (2nd edition Ordnance Survey map) a small outbuilding had been constructed in the northeast corner of the former formal gardens. By 1949 a small extension appears to have been added to the Coach House, against the northwest elevation, leading from the harness room (although the map is not clear). Both buildings have since been removed.

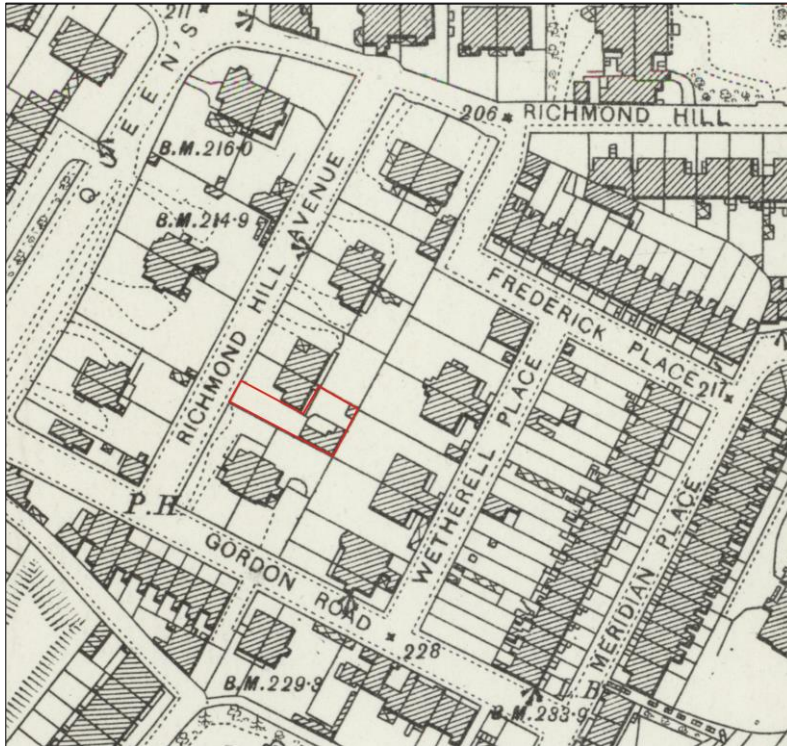


Figure 8 1894-1903 OS 2nd Edition, Project Site outlined in red (Source Know Your Place Bristol)

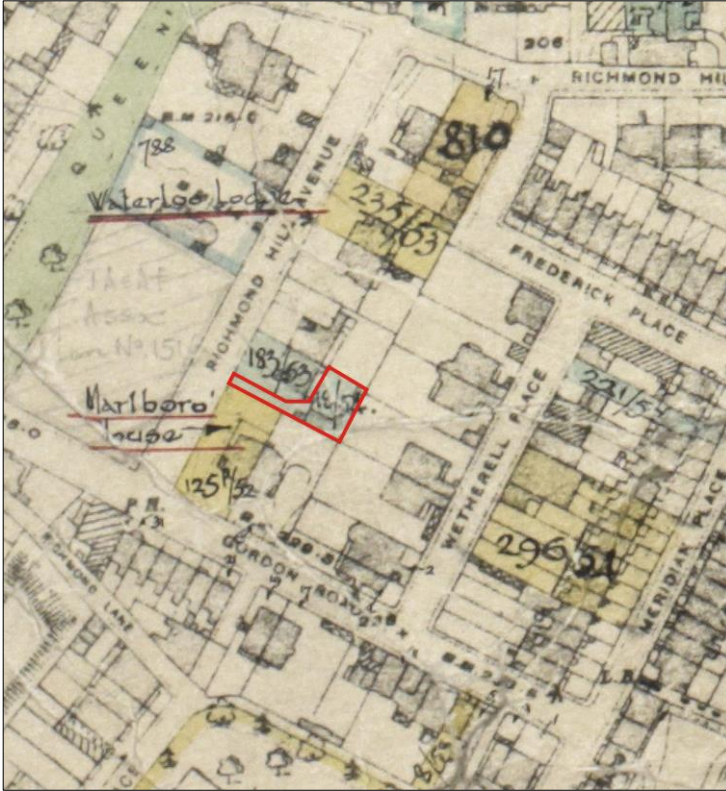


Figure 9 1949 1:2500, Project Site outlined in red (Source Know Your Place Bristol)

3. Significance Statement

- 3.1. The Coach House derives its heritage significance through three main routes. Firstly, Historic Value. The Project Site is set within the curtilage of the Grade II listed 7 Richmond Hill Avenue (formerly Fairlee Villa / Cottage) and therefore represents a curtilage Listed structure. Although extended and enclosed throughout the 20th century the main fabric and footprint of the original 1889 design is preserved. In addition, the existence of historical documents helps to tie the Coach House to the history of the main house and the family that lived there in the late 19th century, adding to the historic value of the buildings as a whole. Further value is derived from having a named architect and original plans documenting the decorative design and construction technique, along with notes on original materials.
- 3.2. Secondly, aesthetic value. The small Coach House has a decorative design, with exposed timber frame upper floor incorporating dormer hayloft and gable end vent which form part of the complex roof. It is only the northeast and northwest elevations which are finished in this ornate style, designed to be primarily visible from the main residence of Fairlee Villa, but also from the adjacent property 5 Richmond Hill Avenue, with which Fairlee shares its listing. The principle elevations are partially visible from the upper storeys of the northeast facing aspects of neighbouring properties on Gordon Road to the south, formerly Marlborough Villa and Southampton Villa.

3.3. Partial views may have been possible from gardens towards the northern end of Wetherell Place. However, a line of mature trees noted on the Town Plan would have interrupted the view. It is notable that the Coach House was not designed to be admired from the southwest or southeast. Here the elevations are constructed in a high red brick wall in common bond with plain parapet. This is a functional supporting wall and does not carry any significant aesthetic weight. However, the properties on Wetherell Place directly to the rear or the Project Site would have had a view of this wall and the roof apex. It is surmised from the cartographic evidence that mature trees bordering the northwest edge of the gardens would have interrupted the view, which may have become more evident in the Autumn and Winter.



Photo 11 Southwest facing view from rear garden of 5 Richmond Hill Avenue. (Source Clear Future Architecture, Planning Document).



Photo 12 Northeast facing view from garden adjacent and to the southwest. Former Southampton Cottage, now on Gordon Road.



Photo 13 North facing view from 3 Wetherell Place to the rear. (Source Clear Future Architecture, Planning Document).

- 3.4. Thirdly setting. Falconer's design was not only functional but took account of the location of the Coach House, occupying a significant part of the garden to the rear and in full view of Fairlee Villa, at the time the home of a prosperous Doctor and his family. With this in mind, the two principle elevations were designed with a decorative upper storey crowned with complex roof and spire finials, in the knowledge that the building would be visible to the Blackers and guests alike. No such care was taken with those elevations not designed to be viewed from Fairlee, and therefore it is fair to say that in this respect the view towards the Coach House from the neighbouring properties was not considered significant at the time of design.
- 3.5. It is also notable that the Coach House and Stable was designed to fit into the southern corner of the formal garden with the northeast wall almost in line with the southwest wall of the main house, resulting in a theoretical uninterrupted line of site from the rear aspect of 7 Richmond Hill Avenue through the garden and beyond, affording views of the garden and drive of 4 Wetherell Place. This would have been possible due to the staggered location of the opposite property (4 Wetherell Place), which is located to the south of the plot. Similarly, it is logical to suggest that 7 Richmond Hill Avenue could have been viewed by the public from outside 4 Wetherell Place. Unfortunately, the view was interrupted on the day of the site visit by the canopy of mature deciduous trees, so no further assessment could be made.



Photo 14 Northwest facing view of driveway belonging to 4 Wetherell Place, towards 7 Richmond Hill Avenue.

- 3.6. The roof apex and brick rear walls impact on the setting of the garden belonging to 3 Wetherell Place to the rear and the former Southampton Cottage (now Gordon Road) to the south. The building of the Coach House would also have impacted significantly on the setting of the garden belonging to 4 Wetherell Place. Although access was not possible at the time of the site visit, pictures from the garden belonging to 3 Wetherell Place demonstrate the scale of the brick wall and give a sense of the interruption of views both to and from these gardens once the late 19th century building was in place.
- 3.7. It is considered that the most significant aspects of setting relate to the way in which the Coach House and Stable was designed to be viewed from Fairlee, and as a consequence 5 Richmond Hill Avenue. Of less concern at the time of building was the consideration of the impact on views to and from neighbouring properties to the south and east, on Gordon Street and Wetherell Place, although it is clear that the Coach House had a significant impact on these also.

4. Impact Assessment & Summary

- 4.1. The proposed new development will replace the existing single storey extension at ground floor level with a new build within the footprint of the existing structure. At first floor level a single bay would

be extended from the northeast elevation of the coach house to allow for an additional bedroom and bathroom. The extension will extend c. 5m northeast from the main coach house.

- 4.2. Plans to increase the height of the extension will have an impact on the setting in that the view from 5 & 7 Richmond Hill Avenue towards the northeast elevation will be interrupted. However, parts of the roof will still be visible and views towards the principle northwest elevation will not be affected. The inter visibility between 7 Richmond Hill Avenue and Wetherell Place will not be significantly restricted by the first floor extension.
- 4.3. The impact of enlarged massing on the Conservation Area should also be taken into consideration. The proposed new wing will not require a significant increase to the footprint of the existing extension, and therefore will not increase the area of developed land within the Conservation Area.
- 4.4. There will be no significant effect on the aesthetic value or setting as perceived from the Gordon Road properties to the south.
- 4.5. With regards to the impact on setting from a public perspective, it is considered that the view of the Coach House from Richmond Hill Avenue is of primary significance with regards to the way in which the building is experienced in the modern period. This view will not be interrupted or altered as a result of the proposed development.
- 4.6. No significant harm is proposed to the historic fabric of the Coach House and Stable and the original plan will be protected within this scheme. The proposed extension will not exceed the height of the historic building and whilst some historic fabric may be masked from view, it will not be removed or altered. It is considered that any harm caused to the project site may be judged as less than substantial when weighed against the preservation of the heritage asset through sympathetic renovation.
- 4.7. Similarly, the impact to the Conservation Area is judged to be less than substantial as the development will not result in the loss of heritage assets or the erosion of significant elements that contribute to the Conservation Area status.
- 4.8. It is considered that the partial restriction of views between the Project Site and Wetherell Place are necessary to optimise the use of the former Coach House and Stable. The scheme offers a chance to repurpose one of the areas 'characterful coach houses', which are noted as being gradually lost within the Conservation Area (Bristol City Council 2010: 42).

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. It is concluded that the historic and aesthetic significance of the Project Site will not be significantly harmed as a result of the proposed development, which will preserve the historic plan and fabric of the Coach House and Stable within the new design and will not impact upon the fabric of the Grade II Listed 5 & 7 Richmond Hill Avenue. It is further concluded that the planned development will cause less than substantial harm to the Project Site and its setting.

- 5.2. In the event that permission is granted, it is recommended that a programme of building recording be carried out to an appropriate level and in accordance with Historic England guidelines, in order to record any historic fabric which may be revealed or removed as a result of the renovation of the Historic Coach House and Stable.

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Bristol Archives <http://archives.bristol.gov.uk/>

Know Your Place Bristol <http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=>

Record Office Resource

BUILDING PLAN/Vol 24/ 12a