

Spongs

100 High Street, Lindfield

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

August 2025

INTRODUCTION

Site Summary

Spongs (100 High Street) is a Grade II historic building officially listed on 11 December 1987, recognised by Historic England for its mid-19th-century architectural character.

The main cottage and shop buildings comprises painted brickwork, slate roof, sash windows with cambered heads, a distinctive central doorway, and an attached low industrial block originally a forge from the 1820's.

Introduction

Spongs cottage occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of the High Street and Brushes Lane. The house dates from the early 19th Century and to this day retains most of its historic character.

Originally 1 property existed on the Spongs plot, the forge. Then through time, various owners of the forge built a cottage and later a shop. The cottage adopted the address 100 high street and the shop was known as 102 high street.

As part of this application we are proposing to replace the existing basement stair and floor to ceiling timber balustrade partition within the existing dining room (previously the shop) with a light-weight metal stair and balustrade that reflects the historic use of the original forge.

Use

The current C3 use of the property will remain.

Amount

No added footprint to the building is being proposed.

The proposed metal staircase will have the same

amount of treads and risers and will sit within the same footprint of the existing stair.

The impact of the stair within the existing dining room will be reduced, with the balustrade designed to sit waist height on both the long length of the stair and the width of the stair at the top landing.

Layout

No changes are proposed to the existing layout of the property.

Scale

No changes are proposed to the existing footprint of the property.

Landscaping

No changes are proposed to the existing landscaping.

Appearance

The sleek metal staircase will appear to float effortlessly against the wall, its slender treads extending outward like geometric shelves suspended in mid-air. Each step cantilevers from a clean metal spine that runs parallel to the existing wall. Delicate metal spindles drop down from the balustrade above to provide further stability to the underside of each tread.

This design transforms the functional requirement of vertical circulation into an architectural feature that emphasizes lightness and transparency.

Access

The proposals do not affect the existing access to the property.

Heritage Statement

See statement within page 5 of this document.

Sustainability

This metal staircase embodies sustainable design principles through its durable steel construction, which offers exceptional longevity and is fully recyclable at end-of-life.

The minimalist structural approach reduces material consumption while the precision-engineered connections eliminate waste during fabrication and installation.

The lightweight design minimizes the building's structural load requirements, and the staircase's timeless aesthetic ensures it won't become obsolete, avoiding premature replacement.

AERIAL VIEW



Google Aerial View of Site

EXISTING INTERNAL CONDITIONS



Existing stair balustrade



Existing stair balustrade



Existing stair balustrade



Existing floor joist in floor
Revealed



Existing flooring within dining
room.



Exposed ground floor
structure within basement
stairwell.



Exposed ground floor
structure within basement
stairwell.



Exposed build up of existing
balustrade.



View of basement stair from
ground floor.



View of basement stair from
basement level.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

HERITAGE

The word Spongs has several meanings one of which is an historic term which translates to ‘a narrow piece of land’. We feel this meaning is the most relevant to the application site discussed here.

The Spongs site has evolved from a blacksmiths workshop, followed by a workers cottage and then a shop. In total three buildings which now serve one household.

Historic records show that the blacksmith John Elliot occupied the site from the 1820's. In 1833 he obtained a mortgage to buy the Spongs plot and in 1838 he obtained a further mortgage to build the cottage, which is the prominent building on the corner of the site, seen as you approach the site from the south of Lindfield high street.

The final building to be erected on the land was the shop which according to historic records was built in the late 1800's. Historic Ordnance Survey maps between 1875-1897 show a change in footprint to the buildings on site.

The shop is addressed 102 High Street and the Cottage is 100 High Street. We believe the change in numbers were used to help differentiate the commercial use with the residential use.

The shop has experienced several alterations since its erection. In 1999 planning approval was granted for a first floor extension. During this time we believe the basement, which was originally accessed via a hatch in the floor, was then opened up and a new timber stair was installed with window adjacent.

As the staircase is a 20th Century addition we understand no harm to the listed building will

occur during the installation of a new staircase.

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)

The proposals do not affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting.

Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA)

The proposals do not affect an Archaeologically Sensitive Area.

Listed Building

The property is Grade II listed. The proposals to alter a later addition stair will result in no loss of historic fabric.

The proposed metal stair is a nod to the historic use of the original blacksmith building which was the first recorded building use of the site in the 1820's.

Conservation Area

Spongs falls within the Lindfield Conservation Area.

Registered Park or Garden of Special Historic Interest

The site is not situated within any of the above.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

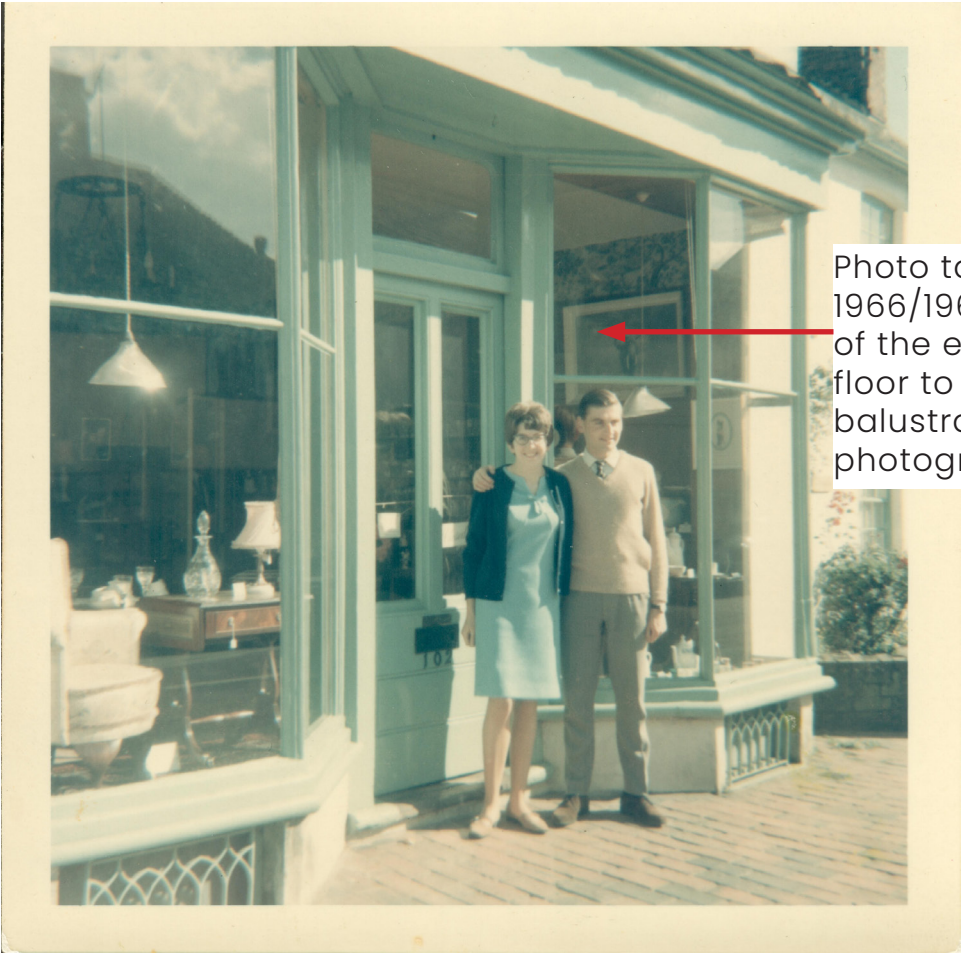


Photo taken between 1966/1968. No evidence of the existing timber floor to ceiling balustrade within this photograph.

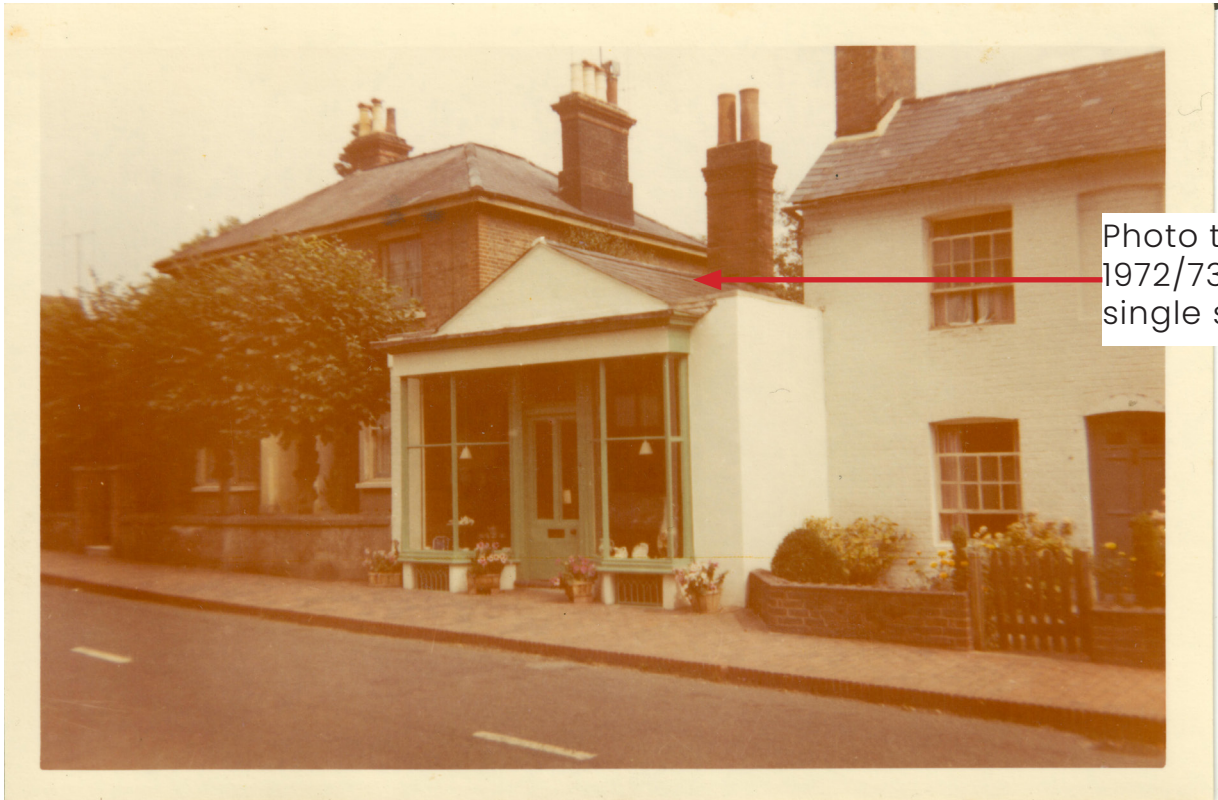


Photo taken between 1972/73. Shop remains single storey.



Photo taken between 1959/1960. No evidence of rooflight here.



April 1973.

PLANNING POLICY | PAST APPLICATIONS

PLANNING POLICY

DP34

Our modern metal staircase has been thoughtfully designed to sit sensitively within the historic fabric of the listed cottage, in full compliance with Mid Sussex District Council's Policy DP34 on listed buildings and heritage assets. The staircase's minimalist aesthetic and lightweight structure ensure it does not compete with or detract from the building's historic character, instead offering a clear visual distinction between old and new.

Its installation avoids any harm to original features, with fixings and structural support carefully located to preserve the historic fabric.

By embracing a contemporary design language while maintaining scale, proportion, and material contrast, the staircase contributes positively to the building's ongoing use and appreciation, aligning with DP34's emphasis on conserving significance and enabling sympathetic adaptation.

DP35

The proposal has been carefully designed to sit harmoniously within the listed cottage, ensuring full compliance with Mid Sussex District Council's Policy DP35, which focuses on conserving heritage assets. The staircase's contemporary and lightweight design allows it to remain visually unobtrusive, clearly distinguishing itself from the historic elements of the building while respecting its character and setting.

Installation methods have been chosen to avoid any adverse impact on the cottage's historic fabric, ensuring that significant architectural features are preserved.

By facilitating the continued use of the building

in a manner that is both functional and sensitive to its heritage, the staircase supports the aims of DP35 to conserve and enhance the historic environment through well considered, sustainable interventions. Mid Sussex Design Guide

PAST APPLICATIONS

DM/21/1358 - Approved

Repairs to cracked brickwork and failed brick arches on front elevation. Re-rendering of ground floor at southern elevation. Replacement of wooden window sill. Re-pointing of external brickwork. Repainting of all external brickwork and front doors. Repair iron gate and railings at front of property.

DM/18/1326 - Approved

Replacement window to light well and internal alterations to lower ground floor.

11/03121/LBC - Approved

Additional archway to be added to internal wall. (Description amended 12/10/11) (Applicants details corrected 14-10-11)

06/00025/FUL & 06/00027/LBC Approved

Division of property into 3 residential units, associated alterations including: alterations to High Street shop front, Brushes Lane garage, single storey rear extension.

03/01392/LBC - Approved

Conversion of shop fronting high street to form part of residential property adjoining 100 high street.

LF/026/99, LF/027/99 - Approved

Bedroom extension over shop (102 high street). Rear extension to retail areas (Brushes Lane - 100 High Street.

EXISTING DETAILS RETAINED

Note - The joists were originally concealed and are only exposed in the photographs below as we have carefully removed some of the existing timber balustrading at floor level to understand the structure underneath.

Retain and preserve existing timber post.



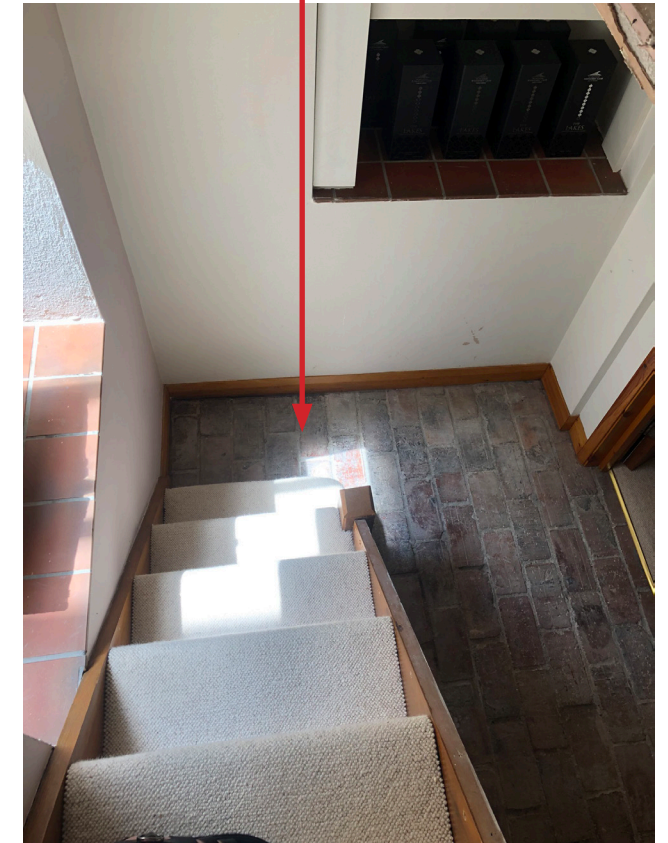
Retain and conceal timber floor joist.



Retain and conceal timber floor joist.

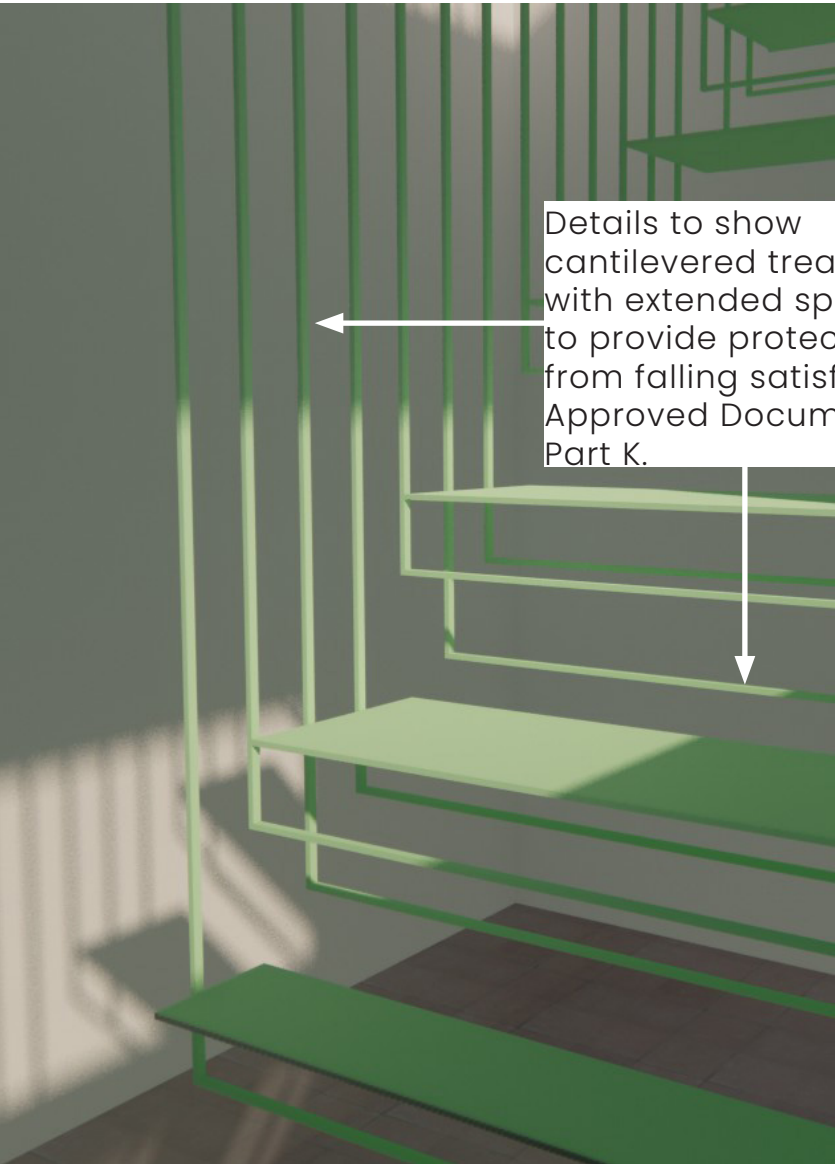


Retain and preserve existing quarry tile basement floor.



PROPOSED SKETCH VIEWS

The 3D sketch views illustrate the design of the new metal staircase, showing that it is structurally hung from the side stringer, which carries the main load. On the opposite side of each tread, support is provided by metal spindles, ensuring both stability and a visually open appearance. These views help convey how the combination of the side stringer and spindle supports works together to achieve the intended structural integrity and design aesthetic.



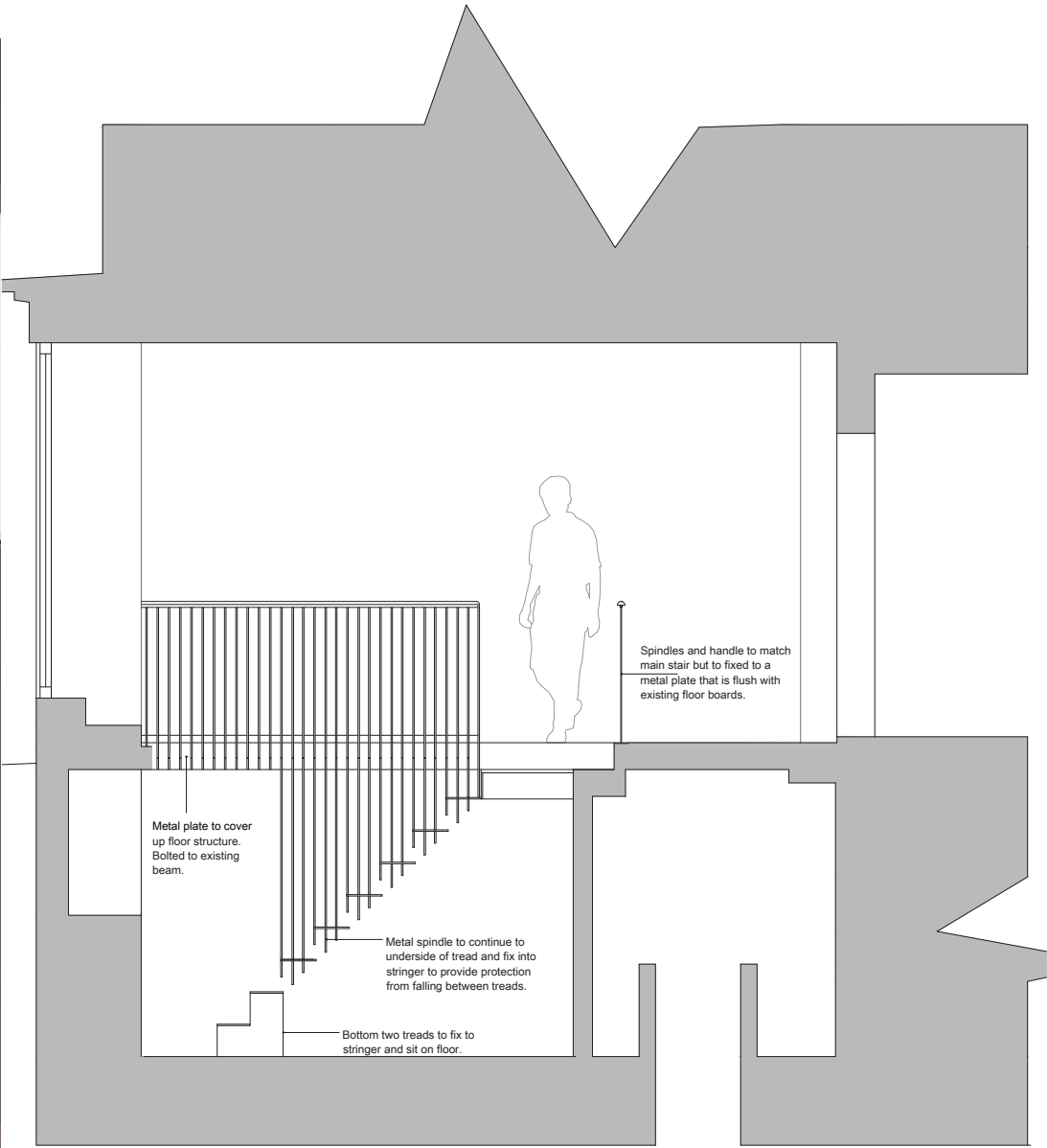
Details to show cantilevered tread with extended spindles to provide protection from falling satisfying Approved Document Part K.

Stair Spindle Detail



Retain and preserve existing quarry tile basement floor.

Proposed view of stair from basement level



Metal plate to cover up floor structure. Bolted to existing beam.

Metal spindle to continue to underside of tread and fix into stringer to provide protection from falling between treads.

Bottom two treads to fix to stringer and sit on floor.

Spindles and handle to match main stair but to fixed to a metal plate that is flush with existing floor boards.

Proposed elevation.

LOCAL CRAFTSMAN

Richard Bradshaw is the local blacksmith in Lindfield. He has been involved in several projects along Lindfield highstreet and even designed, forged and installed the railings that are present within the front garden at Spongs cottage.

Richards involvement in the design and manufacturing of the staircase has been integral to the clients brief since the outset.

We feel his level of expertise and experience with properties in the local Lindfield area will reflect well with the care and attention needed to forge the proposed staircase designed here.



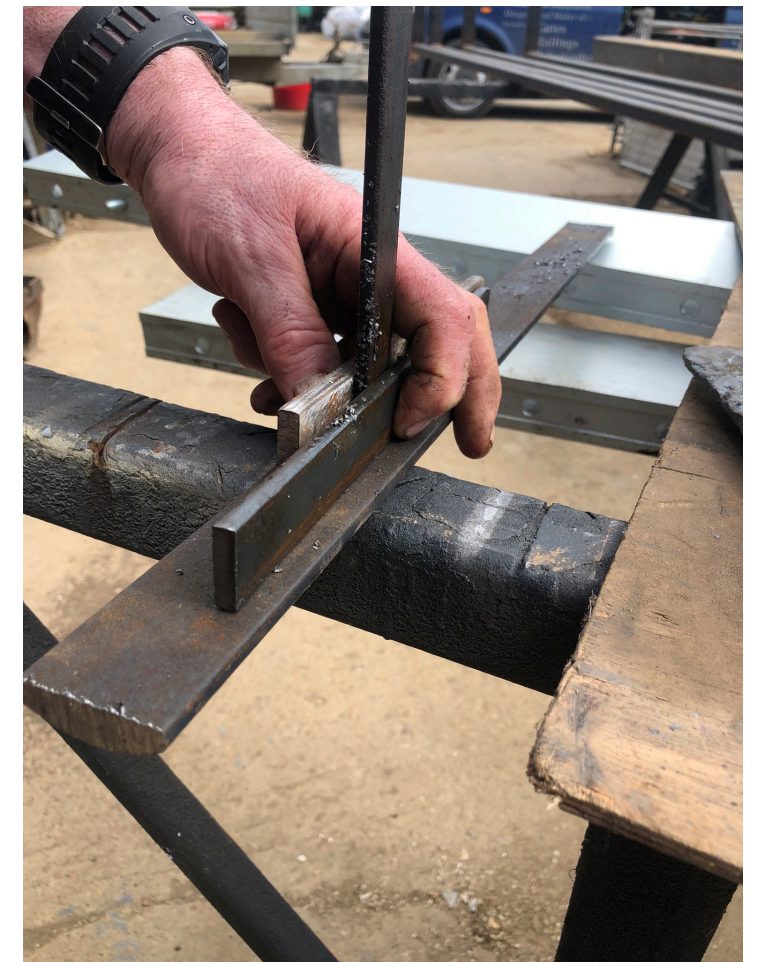
Handrail details.



Richards workshop.



Richards workshop.



Working out the handrail and spindle design.

CONCLUSION

This proposed metal staircase represents a thoughtful marriage of contemporary craftsmanship and historic architecture, breathing new life into the cottage's basement while respecting the Grade II heritage of the Spongs site.

By introducing light, transparency, and sculptural elegance to what was once a utilitarian space, this staircase transforms the basement access into an architectural highlight that celebrates the seamless integration of old and new.

The careful evolution of 100 and 102 High Street is evident throughout the restored spaces of this single dwelling and this intervention continues that narrative.

By removing the imposing timber structure within the existing dining area, a later addition that disrupts the room's original proportions and replacing it with a lightweight, refined design, the existing dining room space will reclaim its intended sense of openness.

We hope the new transformation not only restores the room's historical integrity but ensures the cottage continues to evolve gracefully for future generations.