

Heritage Assessment

Background to Application

- This application for works to the external fabric of London House Broadwindsor is prompted by the need to repair elements which have decayed through the passage of time, occupier neglect and inappropriate external interventions.
- The current application relates to the conservative repair of the kitchen and main stair tower walls.
- The application completes the internal and structural works to the stair tower aconsented under Application No. WD/D/18/002762 on 5 June 2019.

Evolution of the building

- The age and form of the original house is unknown, but certainly pre-dates the front facade and interiors, and the rear stair case tower.
- Its original form was a simple box of walls of around 600mm thickness, increasing to 900-1500mm for the complex double walls and chimney flues at either end. The scale of the chimney breasts suggests fireplaces of a much larger scale, and the (concealed) mantel stone on the ground floor eastern fireplace may be part of an earlier larger fire surround.
- The original building was probably of two floors plus basement, with a large roof void. A surviving stone mullioned window (below), once in the basement rear wall, but now embedded underground by the later kitchen extension suggests 17thC origins.



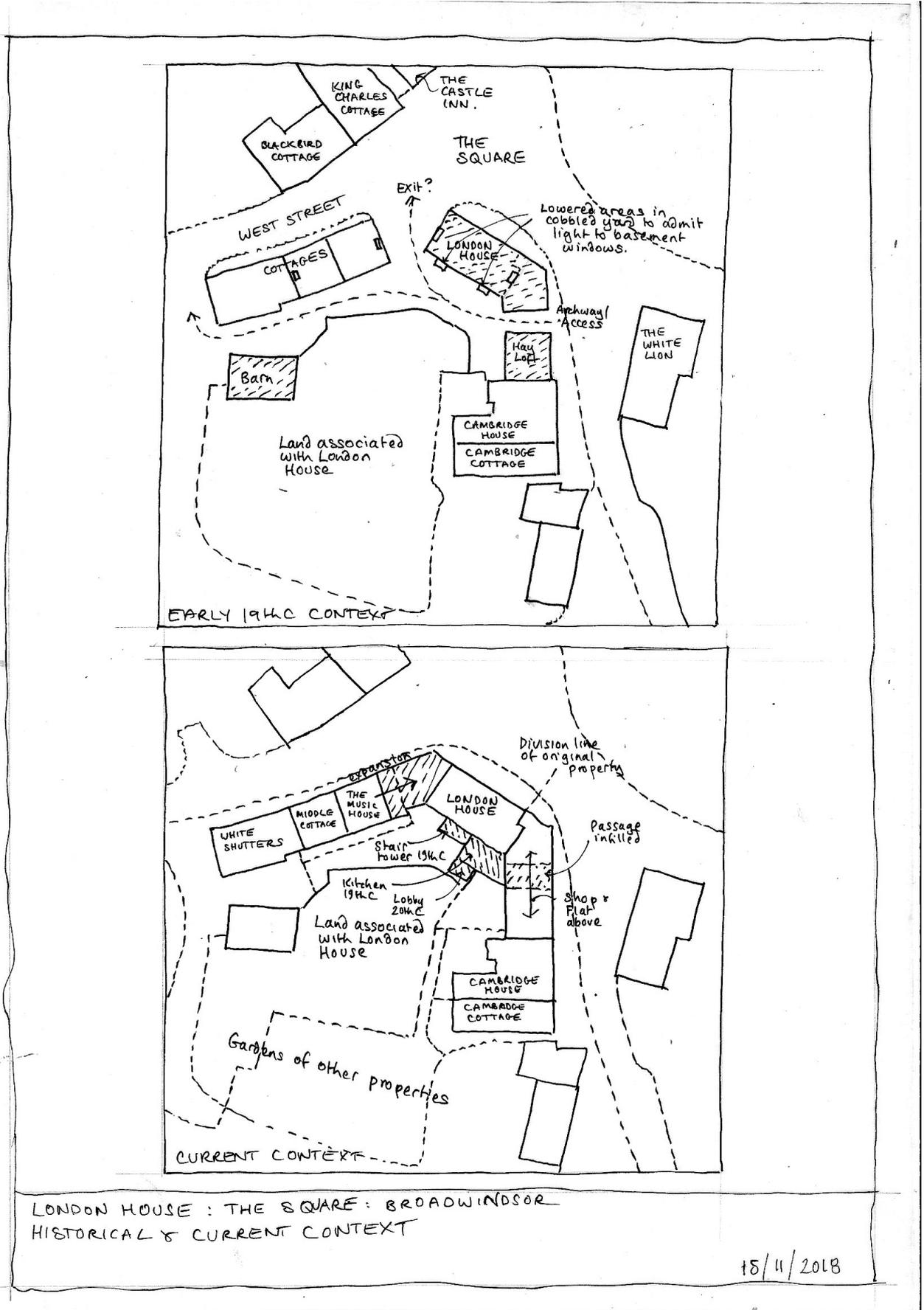
- The house is divided into four main bays by three cross beams, between which run the floor joists at each level. At basement level there is evidence that these beams were built into the stone walls, but have subsequently been strengthened by the addition of corbels or brick piers.
- On the ground floor ceiling of the living room, the cracking of the plaster suggests perhaps a simple stair in the middle of the building from back to front, but no investigative works have been undertaken on the middle floor.
- The existence of the stone mullioned window in the easternmost bay, and a corresponding sunken area and ground level timber beam in the westernmost bay of the basement suggests there may have been two sunken areas to the original rear elevation.
- Drainage investigations carried out behind the original rear elevation in 2017 revealed the existence of a closely compacted churt courtyard at a depth of 300-400mm, and the level of the stone mullioned window is well below this.
- From The Square, London House and Broadwindsor Stores appear as a “L shaped” single building. The roof coverings echo this singularity. It may not always have been the case however.



- The symmetry of London House and its two huge chimneys, taken with the abrupt change of geometry suggests that the Broadwindsor Stores element was either an addition or an adjoining dwelling later incorporated into one building.
- Evidence exists that there was originally a passage from Back Lane opposite the White Lion, and that the building to the south of this passage was originally a hay loft.
- The existence of a contiguous stone retaining wall holding back the higher ground to the south, and the evidence of a much extended form for the Music House from its original build (defined by its eastern chimney), suggests there may have been continuous access for coaches and horses around the cobbled rear yard of London House in the period in which it was an inn. This is shown conjecturally on the sketch plan following.
- In the late 18thC/early 19th C three further changes were made.
 - The front facade was re-faced with ashlar stone and sash windows. The shop front was added later, probably in the last decade of the 19thC.
 - A section of the rear wall was taken down and a stair tower added, with substantial timber beams inserted at each floor level
 - The single story kitchen was added, approached at an angle from the hallway through the 600mm thick rubble stone wall forming the side of the stair tower.

It is not known if these events were separate or all occurred at the same time.

- More recently, the kitchen has been extended upward to form a slate clad flat roofed bathroom, and a utility room forming a lobby to the back door added to the kitchen. Neither adds anything to the “heritage value” of the property.
- At some point in the 19thC the Music House has been extended laterally (possibly in two stages) to abut London House, and more recently the Broadwindsor Stores has been hived off as a separate property (necessitating a flying freehold at the join), with the former arched passageway and hayloft becoming part of the shop and flat above. The quality of design, materials and fenestration of the both elements is poor.



Heritage Context

- London House sits within the Broadwindsor Conservation Area (designated in 1993) and is referenced several times in the more recent “Appraisal” of 2007 (formally adopted October 2015). It is classified as a “Key” Listed Building.
- The most significant value of London House is the role it plays in the definition and completeness of The Square as an urban space, where every adjoining building is similarly listed.
- Note is made in The Appraisal of the asymmetry of the facade (as a product of its development) and this is compounded by the unfortunate critical-windowed flat dormers in the front slope of the roof - inserted at random relative to the fenestration below. It is not known when these were inserted.
- The setting of London House from the rear, although not part of the public domain, is also important as (the blemishes noted above notwithstanding) it is a confident composition, which sits at the centre of the attached lower cottages to the west and south, together with ancillary curtilage listed smaller structures. All
- of these properties look into the (now reduced) garden of London House for which they provide a backdrop.



The proposed works and their impact

- The proposed works are limited to the kitchen and existing stair tower of the rear elevation, and are wholly external. They comprise:-
 - the removal of inappropriate hard cement pointing from various areas of the external wall to the kitchen, and the replacement of an area of severely eroded stonework below the kitchen window.
 - The repointing of the whole wall surface, and the short rubble wall return to the utility room.
 - The realignment and refixing of the existing gutters, and repointing of the base of the brick chimney stack for the Aga.
 - The careful removal of all cement render from the stair tower
 - The repair of the existing windows in situ, with 2" lead eyebrows inserted into the existing open joints, and scribed timber facings fixed to the existing frames where foam is removed.
 - The repointing of the stair tower gable parapet, and re-instatement of the broken finial.