

## **Listed Building Consent Application**

### **HERITAGE, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR SAFETY AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS TO 9 THE CROFT, HEADINGTON, OXFORD OX3 9BU**

**3 May 2021**

#### **Introduction**

A draft Heritage, Design and Access Statement for this Listed Building Consent application was sent to and acknowledged by OCC Planning Services on 25 February 2021. On the same day I paid £165 for pre-application advice (a meeting and a report). Since then, no one has contacted me from OCC Planning Services (other than acknowledging my pre-application - OCC 21/00507/LBPAC) so I have continued to consult with various individuals (e.g. project managers and specialist tradesmen with detailed knowledge and experience of Listed buildings renovation and alterations in Old Headington) in order to update my original Heritage, Design and Access Statement. Since the submission of my draft Heritage, Design and Access Statement on 25 February 2021, I have made alterations to this statement to ensure that my application maintains or improves the character of 9 The Croft as best as possible. For example, I am not submitting for double-glazed first floor cottage window replacements but hand-made single-glazed like-for-like replacements instead.

This Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Listed Building Consent application to improve the safety, character and access of 9 The Croft (a grade II listed building in the Old Headington Conservation Area) through the following improvements:

- Repairing the roof (which is shedding tiles and lead flashing).
- Replacing the three first floor windows, which have rotted through, with hand-made wooden windows of the same design and appearance.
- Repairing a hole in the render at the front of the house.
- Removing a dilapidated, 40cm high single blockwork concrete front garden wall (constructed in the early 1980s) and replacing it with a professionally built 60cm natural stone wall (stone type to match that of the Listed outbuilding next door).
- Replacing the rotted boards and modern roof felt of the front door porch roof with new wooden boards and a traditional lead top.
- Replacing a dilapidated and ugly concrete cellar ventilation cover (constructed in the early 1980s) with one of a more sympathetic character, using traditional reclaimed bricks and a structural glass cover.
- Replacing the asbestos roof of the rear outbuilding/shed with a zinc roof.
- Installation of a small toilet within the exiting rear extension (constructed in 2007) by way of the partitioning of a small area within the modern rear extension.



*9 The Croft from the front*

The works have been described by OCC Planning Services as: *“Replacement of 3no. windows to first floor, repairs to the roof and render, demolition of existing front garden wall and erection of replacement stone wall, refurbishment of front porch, replacement of cellar ventilation cover with structural glass cover, replacement rear outbuilding asbestos roof with zinc roof and internal partition to existing rear extension to create a WC.”*

## **Heritage**

### Historical, Communal and Aesthetic Context<sup>1</sup>

Old Headington has its origins in a royal manor belonging to the Saxon Kings. Although the original royal manor house was already ruinous in medieval times and successive fires destroyed the ancient crofters cottages, many of the more substantial post-medieval stone houses and the medieval Church of St Andrew have survived. Old Headington retained its essential village function and character until the last quarter of the 18th century, when migration from the city began to take effect. Prosperous tradesmen built houses for themselves, usually in extensive grounds and surrounded by high stonewalls, on the fringe of the medieval settlement. Slowly the village acquired its present residential character. Most of the houses in the Old Headington have retained their residential, village character. The most recent and continuing change is the introduction of small infill closes of new houses, together with the infilling of single plots. Despite the change of its original function, Old Headington still retains much of the appearance of a typical Oxfordshire village

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<sup>1</sup> Taken and edited from Oxford City Council’s Conservation Area Overview and Appraisal.

of the 17th - 19th centuries. This is mainly due to the survival of its old stone houses, its walls and roads with their still largely unspoiled green embankments and stone kerbings.

Most of the Old Headington's surviving agricultural buildings, which formed elements of several farm units, have now been converted to new uses but remain as evidence of the former agricultural activity of the settlement. Other buildings reflect the changing economy and social life of this former rural centre, including inns, former shops, bakeries, non-conformist chapels, schools and even a village reading room and temperance house. The influence of the city, university and the many colleges is represented in the prosperity of the village's inns (at least since the late 17th century), the development of the country residences, and the conversion of notable buildings for educational establishments.

The Croft is formed of a network of small quiet lanes, which provide an attractive residential area bounded by the high stone garden walls of large houses. The area is tranquil with little vehicle traffic and provides a well-used pedestrian friendly environment. At the heart of this area is an enclave of cottages or small houses, which form a hidden community within the village. The area was formed from the medieval or early post-medieval settlement pattern, with small agricultural buildings (such as numbers 9,11, 11A The Croft, and the rear of the White Hart pub) at the rear of properties fronting onto St Andrew's Road, which were subsequently converted into cottages (such as 9, 11 and 11A The Croft).

Houses throughout the area are of a consistent low scale, rarely of more than two stories, whilst the cottages at Nos. 9, 11 and 11a The Croft (see photograph below) are a group of single storey cottages with additional attic rooms lit by dormer windows.

9 The Croft is a terraced cottage that lies in the middle of the line of former agricultural cottages/stables/barns on the northern edge of The Croft. This terrace now consists of three houses (including 9 The Croft) and an outbuilding, all of which are Grade II Listed.

It is likely that 9 The Croft is an agricultural building, built of local limestone, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This cottage housed the Headington subscription reading room from 1858, and in 1876 was turned into a British Workman club. It was too small, however, to cope with the demand, and the new British Workman club opened in Old High Street in 1881. Several unsympathetic alterations were made to the cottage, probably in the early 1980s. This application seeks to improve some of them and to improve their safety and access.



*Looking west along the northern edge of the Croft; on the right-hand side, 11 The Croft is the nearest cottage in view, followed by 9 The Croft and then the outbuilding of the White Hart pub.*

### **Background to this Application**

I have been assisted in preparing this Heritage, Design and Access statement by consulting with neighbours who have experience of their own Listed Building applications. They have also consulted friends and family members (e.g. an architect and planning lawyer) on my behalf. My neighbours strongly support this application as it will improve the safety and character of not just my house but of our part of The Croft as well.

### **The Roof**

The roof of the main building (traditional clay tiles) was repaired in 2007. This included work on the three dormer roofs as well as the main roof. Unfortunately, the work was done badly. Tiles have blown off and landed in the cul-de-sac street below, and this presents a danger to children who play in the street and pedestrians walking by. As can be seen in the photograph below, the lead flashing on the dormer roofs is also coming off and water has entered (contributing to window and dormer gable damage).

The roof and dormers will be repaired and re-tiled with the same tiles, replacing any faulty or missing ones with like for like hand-made tiles (we have many spare tiles in the shed). The work will be conducted by a roofing expert with significant experience of Listed buildings (including Old Headington) and churches. The gable ends on the dormers are modern rendered



boards which are rotting (see blue oval on photo below); they will be replaced in a like-for-like manner.



*A dormer*



*Damaged and rotting gable end*

## The Windows

We believe that the ground floor and first floor (dormer) window frames and casements were installed in the early 1980s (the builder and joiner have confirmed that they are not more than about 40 years old, and a photograph from the 1970s shows different windows in place). Our general builder and joiner (both with experience of Listed buildings in Old Headington) will repair the ground floor windows but both have said that the dormer window frames and casements are beyond repair. A major part of the problem with the dormer windows is that they are south facing and exposed to elements (in this respect repaired dormer roofs and lead covering on the gable ends will help a bit).



*Deteriorating but relatively modern ground floor window*

Following advice from a local family-run company (Gelders) that makes windows (e.g. for Oxford colleges and Listed buildings – including Old Headington), the three first floor (dormer) window frames and casements are rotten and need replacing. However, the ground floor windows can be saved and will be repaired. The next three images are of the three dormer windows.



*The bottom edge of the left-hand dormer casement and window have completely rotted away*



*It would be possible to push a finger through the rotting wood of the middle dormer*





*The right-hand dormer*

Having consulted with our joiner, the dormer casements and frames will be replaced with like for like, hand-made single-glazed wooden casements and frames. Accoya wood will be used as it is the most durable and required to withstand the difficult environmental location. Traditional hand made black ironmongery will be used, replacing the current early 1980s steel ironmongery. The single-glazed dormer casements and frames will be replaced in a like-for-like manner. CAD diagrams for the casements and frames can be supplied by Gelders (an Oxford company with considerable experience of providing joinery to Listed Buildings in Oxford). The windows will be painted in white satin to match the current paint (and to match the windows of neighbouring cottages).

### **The Hole in the Render**

To the front right of the house is a large hole and crack in the render (see photo below). A general builder who has worked on many Listed buildings in the area said it needs removing and investigating. There is a cavity behind it. The render is relatively modern (of a pebble dash type) and it may be that what is behind it is much older and more in character with the cottage. Once the render is removed, OCC Planning will be consulted to determine whether what is behind it presents a better opportunity for enhancing the character of the building or whether it should be re-rendered as before.





*The hole and crack in the render above the gate.*

### **The Front Garden Wall**

The front garden wall originates from unsympathetic alterations that were made in the early 1980s. As can be seen from the photograph below, it is of poor and ugly construction. Over the years, cars and vans have damaged it while trying to turn in the narrow cul-de-sac. The roots of two hedges are also destroying it. Being only 40cm high, it is also a safety hazard to pedestrians and children – it would be easy to trip and fall on the wall, with the sharp top edges posing a head injury risk. The wall will be removed and replaced with a traditional stone wall using local stone, approximately 60cm high. The stone will come from a quarry near Burford that has provided stone to match Old Headington stone for other Listed Building projects in Old Headington. The stone will match the Listed outbuilding next door (west) which can be seen in an earlier photograph of the cul-de-sac (see 'Heritage' section). The wall will be built by an individual who has built and repaired many stone walls in the Old Headington Conservation Area. It will be capped in a traditional manner in keeping with the stone wall opposite number 9 The Croft (see photograph below).





*Damaged front garden wall at 9 The Croft*



*Wall opposite number 9 The Croft*



### **The Front Door Porch**

Above the front door is a small porch roof, which can be seen in the first photograph of this application. It is in very poor condition and will be repaired so that the character is maintained. The only parts that will need to be replaced are the modern cover elements (felt and some rotten boards that the felt covers). These will be replaced by new like for like wooden boards, covered in traditional lead rather than felt. The wooden sides and supports will be kept, they will be repaired and re-painted.



*The underside of the porch cover showing the rotten wooden boards*

### **The Cellar Ventilation Cover**

At the front of the house is a concrete cellar ventilation cover which was constructed in the early 1980s. It is ugly and in a poor state of repair. A builder has said it needs replacing. It will be replaced by a more attractive design using reclaimed red bricks and a structural glass cover (to let light into the cellar below). The intent is for a lower profile – one or two red bricks in height – so that it is less of an eyesore than it currently is. The structural glass cover will be made by Gelders.



*The cellar ventilation cover*

### **The Shed/Outbuilding Roof**

The shed/outbuilding in the small rear garden is falling apart. The asbestos roof will be removed by a specialist company and replaced with a more aesthetically pleasing (and more weatherproof) zinc roof.





*The shed/outbuilding*

### **The Ground Floor Toilet**

A small extension was added to the rear of the cottage in the early 1980s. It was renovated in 2007 (see 07/01517/LBC ). There is no toilet on the ground floor and only one toilet in the whole building – on the first floor at the end of a very narrow corridor. This means that an individual with a disability or access difficulties would not be able to use a toilet in the house. Rather than disturb the fabric of the much older ground floor area to the front of the cottage, the plan is to create a small toilet at the end of, and within, the existing rear extension by using a sound-proof partition. The toilet area would be where the light green dresser is in the photograph below, and the partition would end on the right-hand edge of the picture on the right-hand wall. A small window (approximately 45cm wide and 65cm high) would be inserted at the position shown by the blue oval in the second photograph below (corresponding to the area on the left-hand edge of the picture in the first photograph below).



*The interior end of the modern rear extension – looking west*



*The rear extension – looking west*