

# COMBINED DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

SINGLE STOREY DETACHED OAK FRAMED SUMMER  
HOUSE AT WEST COTTAGE, MAIN ROAD, BUCKLAND,  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



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May 2022

## Introduction

This combined Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Julius Bahn Ltd to accompany a householder planning application for a proposed freestanding oak framed summer house outbuilding to be sited in the garden of West Cottage. West Cottage is an old detached dwelling located within the northern part of Buckland, a village situated between Aylesbury to the west and Tring to the east.

West Cottage is a listed building and also lies within Buckland Conservation Area.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings enclosed with the accompanying application, including:

- Location Plan (drg. 51869/01);
- Proposed Block Plan (drg. 51869/02);
- Proposed Floor Plan, Roof Plan & Elevations (drg. 51869/03).

Julius Bahn Ltd will be designing and constructing the proposal on behalf of the applicant. Julius Bahn are one of the country's leading specialists in the design and construction of oak framed buildings for all kinds of domestic and other uses, utilising traditional mortise and tenon pegged joint carpentry techniques.

## The Proposal

The proposal is to construct a detached freestanding garden outbuilding within the rear garden of the existing property, close to its rear boundary. It is intended that the new outbuilding would be used as an outside summer house from which to enjoy the garden and outside living.

The proposed detached outbuilding would be a simple oak framed structure with its front and side elevations incorporating full height glazing. The rear elevation facing back towards the neighbour at Leaside would be finished in brickwork. The outbuilding would have a dual pitched roof finished in reclaimed plain tiles.

## Heritage Statement

West Cottage is a timber framed cottage dating from the C17, although with later alterations/additions. It is a detached one-and-a-half storey dwelling with the exposed timber framing infilled with colourwashed brick. It has a thatched half-hipped roof. There is a modern single storey building with a steeply pitched tiled roof running parallel to the north-west of the original cottage which is now attached and incorporated into the floor plan via a flat roofed link. This has placed the main front door on the north-east elevation facing Main Road, whereas historically the principal elevation of the cottage faced south-east into what is now the side garden. There is also a modern conservatory constructed to the rear.

West Cottage is located towards the north of the historic core of Buckland, the historic core now being included within Buckland Conservation Area. West Cottage sits just within the northern extent of the Conservation Area boundary. Buckland was historically an agricultural settlement and it displays an essentially linear development pattern although plot sizes, spacing and distances of individual buildings from the road all vary. There is also a variety of ages and styles of buildings from the C13, C16/17 through to the C20/C21.

West Cottage was first listed Grade II on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 1985. For reference, the listing description reads as follows:

*Cottage. C17 altered. Timber framed with colourwashed brick infill, some tile hanging. Thatched roof, half hipped with central brick chimney. One-and-a-half storeys, open porches each side with tiled lean-to roof, two 3-light casements between and panel with crest of Edward Bonus under eaves. Modern square bay to RH gable with tiles roof, 2-light casement above. Modern 1 storey lean-to extension to rear.*

West Cottage derives its heritage significance from its age and place within the historical development of Buckland. It has a high degree of significance as a surviving C17 rural cottage, although that significance has been partly eroded by the modern alterations and additions. However the property still evidences rural domestic architecture, construction techniques, materials and building layout from the C17. The presence of the building also contributes to the understanding of the socio-economic development of Buckland and its place in the wider geography and topography of the rural area to the east of Aylesbury.

Although now surrounded by later development, West Cottage is one of a number of C16/C17 former farmhouses and cottages which survive in the village. These buildings are typically one-and-a-half to two storeys in height and constructed from timber frame with brick infill panels and thatched or previously thatched roofs. The Council's Buckland Conservation Area Appraisal (2014) identifies West Cottage as amongst a small number of surviving C16/C17 cottages which form a distinct group. West Cottage, Queensmeade, Yewtree Cottage, Peggs House and The Old Duke's Head are all described as significant partly because of their similar scale and form and also because they retain both their part timbered construction and their thatched gabled and half-hipped roofs. In these respects West Cottage makes a positive contribution to the history, setting and character of the Conservation Area.

No other statutorily listed buildings immediately neighbour West Cottage, although Queensmeade sits to the north-east on the opposite side of Main Road. Queensmeade is a Grade II listed house also dating from the C17 and also of timber framed construction with a thatched roof. The next closest listed building is Havering House located two plots away to the south. Havering House is a Grade II listed early C18 house constructed from red brick with a tiled roof. Because the proposed summer house would be located in the rear garden of West Cottage, on the opposite side of the road to Queensmeade and two plots away from Havering House, it would not be seen within the setting of either of those listed buildings.

The proposed summer house outbuilding would be a relatively minor garden feature which would be constructed close to the rear boundary of the rear garden to the plot, some 18m away from West Cottage itself. In this location it would not be visible from outside the site passing along Main Road, and would not be visible in any key views through the Conservation Area as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The proposal would be a modest single storey garden structure, wholly subservient to the much greater size and scale of the existing cottage and also visually lightweight in terms of its construction which would incorporate large areas of glazing. At the same time the oak framed construction of the proposed summer house would reflect the historic timber framed construction of West Cottage, but it would also appear as an obviously modern garden outbuilding, allowing the historic form and setting of the existing cottage to remain legible. As a detached outbuilding the proposal would obviously result in no disturbance to any of the existing historic building fabric to West Cottage.

It is therefore considered that the proposed summer house would cause no undue harm to the appearance, character or setting of West Cottage, would not materially impact on the character and setting of the Conservation Area, or cause any harm to the contribution West Cottage makes to the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

Taking the above into account, the following sections of this statement assess the proposal in further detail.

### Use

The use proposed is wholly domestic. This is a domestic garden structure that would provide incidental space to the existing dwelling. It is intended that the new outbuilding would be used as a garden summer house.

The use of the proposal is entirely appropriate in principle for this existing residential property. The proposed use in itself would not have any impact on the appearance or setting of the listed building, or that of the wider Conservation Area.

### Amount

At 4.28m in length by 3.0m in width overall, the proposal would be a very modest garden outbuilding, providing only a small and minor increase in floor area over the much greater footprint and one-and-a-half storey area of the existing cottage. The overall height of the proposal, designed with a roof pitch steep enough to accept clay plain tiles, would be well below the much greater one-and-a-half storey height of the existing building. The proposal is for a single storey outbuilding, set well back against the rear boundary of the garden and a good distance away from the main cottage, so that in terms of the amount of development it would not crowd or block views of the existing listed building or be seen from elsewhere within the Conservation Area.

The proposal has therefore been designed to appear as a wholly subservient garden outbuilding in terms of the amount of development proposed, being of a size that would appear as a very minor feature within the site and one that would not dominate the appearance of the existing building. The oak framed and weatherboarded appearance of the new garden outbuilding would also visually reduce its perceived prominence against the more solid timber framed and brick form of the existing cottage.

The proposal would not take up any significant amount of garden or amenity space. West Cottage is set within a generous plot and domestic curtilage, so large areas of open garden would remain to serve the property. The building to plot ratio would remain comparable to the mixed character of development surrounding West Cottage.

Therefore in terms of the amount of development proposed, this proposal would not unduly harm the appearance or setting of the listed building or its contribution to the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

### Layout

As described above, the proposed summer house would be set back towards the rear boundary of the existing garden, some 30m from the property's frontage boundary with Main Road and 18m from the cottage itself. In this position the proposal would not be sited prominently within the plot and would leave existing available views towards the listed building clear. The site is also relatively well screened

by existing boundary hedging and trees, so the new outbuilding would not be visible in views approaching the site from either direction along Main Road.

The proposed outbuilding would be constructed over a very small part of the existing garden to the property, with no trees or visually significant areas of planting taken up. Large areas of private garden and amenity space would remain to serve the property.

As the proposed summer house would be a freestanding structure, obviously no intervention into the historic fabric of the existing cottage would be required.

In terms of layout, therefore, the proposal would have no undue impact on the appearance, character or setting of the listed building, or that of the wider Conservation Area.

### Access

There would be no alterations to the existing access arrangements to the property. Access points and parking provision would remain as existing.

The proposed summer house would be large enough to be adapted for future wheelchair access if required, particularly as the design incorporates wide opening bi-folding doors.

### Scale

As described above the proposed outbuilding would be a very minor single storey garden structure, which would be only a small fraction of the much greater existing floor area of the main cottage and well below the much greater one-and-a-half storey height of the existing. The proposal would therefore clearly appear as a wholly subservient addition against the much greater bulk and scale of the existing listed cottage and sited towards the rear of its relatively generous garden area.

Furthermore, the perceived bulk and scale of the new summer house would be reduced by its oak framed and partly glazed construction. This would give the new structure a visually more lightweight appearance than an outbuilding constructed entirely from, say, brickwork, contrasting markedly with the larger solid form of the existing cottage.

As such, the scale of the proposal would be wholly appropriate to its setting and would not dominate the appearance or character of the much larger listed main building, and would not harm the existing building's contribution to the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

### Appearance

The proposed summer house would be a high quality traditional oak framed structure that would provide a sustainable solution with materials which offer a long lifespan. The oak frame would 'silver off' over time, helping the structure to appear weathered-in to its surroundings.

The oak framed construction of the proposed summer house would also reflect the character of the historic oak framing of the existing cottage, whilst at the same time its oak framed and glazed nature would also mean that it would clearly appear as a subservient and visually lightweight outbuilding to the property. The form of construction and the nature of its design/materials would allow the new structure to be visually differentiated from the original cottage building, enabling successive phases of the historic evolution of the building and site to remain easily read. The historic building in its existing form would remain easily legible.

The appearance and design of the proposal is therefore entirely appropriate to this setting and would not unduly harm the character or appearance of the existing listed building, or that of the wider Conservation Area.

### Landscape

No new landscaping is specifically proposed as part of this minor householder application. The garden to the property is already attractively landscaped and well maintained. No existing trees or visually significant areas of garden/landscaping would have to be removed to accommodate the proposal.

Therefore the landscape setting of the existing cottage within this rural village and Conservation Area would not be materially affected.

### Sustainable Development

The proposed summer house would be constructed of oak sourced from well managed sustainable and renewable forests, whilst the traditional carpentry methods to be employed rely less on the use of modern power tools and would provide a structure that could be more easily dismantled and the materials reused elsewhere if required. The proposed construction method and materials to be used are therefore highly sustainable.

Surface water drainage would employ sustainable methods, such as the installation of a water butt for capturing and recycling rainwater around the garden.

### Conclusions

The above demonstrates that the nature of the design, layout, construction and appearance of the proposed freestanding summer house outbuilding would not unduly harm the character, appearance or setting of this listed cottage or its contribution to the history, character and setting Buckland Conservation Area. The proposed summer house would be a relatively minor garden feature which would be sited back against its rear garden boundary at the rear of the plot, not sited prominently in relation to the existing cottage, and not readily visible in any key views through the Conservation Area.

The proposal would be a wholly subservient structure in relation to the much greater size and scale of the existing cottage and would also be visually lightweight in terms of its construction. The oak framed construction of the proposed outbuilding would reflect the historic timber framed construction of West Cottage, but at the same time the new structure would appear as a relatively obvious modern garden outbuilding, allowing the historic form and setting of the existing building to remain legible. The new summer house would be sited well away from the existing cottage, allowing available views of the listed building to remain clear with no disturbance to any existing historic building fabric.

As such the proposal would cause no undue harm to the character and setting of this listed building, or its setting within the Buckland Conservation Area.