

BROOK COTTAGE, OZLEWORTH GL12 7QB

Design & Access Statement

Heritage Appraisal and Justification Statement

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Brook Cottage is situated deep in the Ozleworth Valley. The house was purchased by the Applicants in 2021. They seek consent for works to improve the accommodation to suit their needs. They understand very well the duty to maintain the integrity of the house within the context of the Ozleworth Park Estate and surrounding landscape and have every intention to do so.

1.2 The house is listed Grade II. The site is not in a Conservation Area but it is in the Cotswolds AONB. Access to the house is directly from the narrow lane which continues as far as Holwell Farm where it ends.

1.3 The proposed works are not expected to have any significant ecological impact however an ecological appraisal is being prepared to support this application. This will include recommendations relating to the works to the roof and any affect this will have on bats.

1.4 The site is within a Flood Zone. A Flood Risk Assessment is not considered necessary because no changes are proposed that would increase any flood risk.

2.0 **HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION**

2.1 The property was listed very recently and the Statutory List provides a very full description of the house as follows :

BROOK COTTAGE, OZLEWORTH, GL12 7QB

Summary: House, formerly two cottages, late C18 / early C19. Converted to one property in around 1961 by the poet Charles Tomlinson.

Reasons for Designation: Brook Cottage in the Ozleworth Valley, Gloucestershire is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest: * as a representative example of vernacular building in the area including the use of Cotswold stone roofing; * the historic layout as two cottages can still be read, and the good survival of features including the two winder staircases substantiate this; * for unusual details such as the timber decoration to the windows and hoppers, and the representation of local craft skills in the hand-forged door and window catches.

Historic interest: * for its strong association with the celebrated poet and translator Charles Tomlinson, who lived at Brook Cottage with his family from 1958. * as part of the development of the Ozleworth Park estate in the late C18.

Group value: * with other listed buildings on the Ozleworth Park estate, of which it was once part, including Ozleworth Park and the Church of St Nicholas of Myra, both of which are listed Grade II*.

History:

Brook Cottage is located approximately two miles south-west of Wotton-under-Edge at the foot of the Cotswold Hills in the Ozleworth Valley. Less than a mile to the north-west is Newark Park, and less than half a mile to the north is Ozleworth Park; in their entirety they formed part of the manor of Ozleworth. The manor was leased from the Abbey of Kingswood, which was dissolved in 1538 when it came into the ownership of Sir Nicholas Poyntz of Acton Court, Gloucestershire (1510-1556); he built a hunting lodge at Newark Park in the 1550s. In 1722 the manor was sold to the Harding family. The house at Ozleworth Park was begun in the C18 by George Miller (d.1787). It remained part of the Newark Park estate until 1821, at which time the north part of the house was built by William Miller (d.1846); both George and William had been High Sheriff of Gloucestershire. In 1849 Ozleworth Park was purchased by Sir John Rolt (1804-1871), who added a service wing to the house and lived there until his death, when the estate, including farms and cottages, was passed to his son.

In comparison to the main house and the adjacent Church of St Nicholas of Myra, little is known about the history of the other buildings on the Ozleworth Estate. Brook Cottage is depicted on the 1838 Tithe map as one building with smaller north and south wings but is described in the apportionment as two tenements and garden. The building is shown in more detail on the 1882 Ordnance Survey (OS) as a symmetrical pair of cottages with ancillary bays to the end of each. Sir John Rolt's will of 1868 refers to Brook Cottage although it seems reasonable to assume that the building was always intended as two cottages to be inhabited by estate workers. The groom and gamekeeper are known to have been living there when the Ozleworth Estate was put up for auction in July 1947. Brook Cottage is described in the sales particulars as 'a pair of picturesque cottages' with good gardens. One cottage had a living room with range, a small sitting room with a fireplace, and two bedrooms, one with a fireplace. The other cottage had two living rooms with fireplaces and three small bedrooms. Both had a scullery and attics. An accompanying photograph shows two small rooflights on the western roof slope. The two cottages (known as Brook Cottage and Bridge Cottage) were sold in October 1947.

In July 1958 Brook Cottage was bought by the poet Charles Tomlinson, CBE (1927-2015), followed in May 1961 by Bridge Cottage. Tomlinson and his wife Brenda knocked the two cottages together and lived here at Brook Cottage until his death. Born in Stoke on Trent, at high school Tomlinson was taught by European teachers and read European literature, leading to a lifelong passion for language and translated poetry. In 1944 he met Brenda Raybould (b.1928; m.1948), and the following year won an exhibition to Queens' College, Cambridge; despite being unhappy there, in his final year he was introduced to modernist American poets which fostered an interest in transatlantic poetry. In 1956 Tomlinson became a lecturer in English at the University of Bristol, where he stayed for 36 years. Two years later the Tomlinsons made their home at Brook Cottage, and it became the centre from which they travelled around the world meeting and collaborating with fellow poets and artists. Frequent visits to America followed the publication of

'Seeing is Believing' in New York; after being rejected in Britain it was reissued in 1960, followed in 1963 by 'A Peopled Landscape'. Their travel continued, as did encounters and friendships with the likes of Georgia O'Keefe, Ezra Pound and Octavio Paz. Works in the 1970s included 'Written on Water' and 'The Way In'. 'The Flood', written in 1981, recounts the dramatic flooding of Brook Cottage. The Tomlinsons received many guests at Brook Cottage including Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, James Lees Milne, John Berger, and Sir Nicholas Mander. Bruce Chatwin and Elizabeth Chandler bought Holwell Farm, 300m from Brook Cottage, in 1966, and Tomlinson and Chatwin often spent time together when they were not travelling. Tomlinson's later collections continued to be influenced by the Mediterranean and Gloucestershire and he also edited and translated many other works. His poems won international recognition and he received many prizes in Europe and America; he was made a CBE in 2001. He died at Brook Cottage in September 2015; Brenda died in 2019 and they are both buried at the Church of St Nicholas of Myra.

Details:

House, formerly two cottages, late C18 / early C19. Converted to one property in around 1961 by the poet Charles Tomlinson.

MATERIALS: stone construction, lime rendered. Cotswold stone-tile hipped roof with brick axial and gable-end stacks; short rendered stacks to end bays. Timber-framed windows with metal casements with leaded lights.

PLAN: rectangular in plan with smaller bays at each end. The house reflects its previous layout as two cottages, with two winder staircases against the rear wall. The end bays are used for ancillary purposes (kitchen and utility) whilst the two halves of the building – the party wall remains in situ – are variously sub-divided.

EXTERIOR: Brook Cottage is orientated north-west to south-east with its principal elevation facing south-west. It has two storeys with attics and is five bays long with additional single-storey end bays. Two open-fronted porches with stone-tile hipped gable roofs are placed symmetrically on the principal elevation and have timber plank doors with wrought-iron fittings. Windows flank each porch on the ground floor and above them to the first floor; the porch to the north has an additional window above. Each window has two casements, and each window head has a cut-out timber decoration of four semi-circular arches. The single-storey end bays each have a timber plank door and adjacent two-casement window. The rear elevation is blind apart from a small window on the ground floor; the end elevations are also blind. Historic rainwater goods survive, including bracketed square-section lead gutters and conical cast-iron hoppers; on the front elevation at eaves level there are two decorative hoppers with scalloped decoration.

INTERIOR: the house has two entrances on its south-west side into the present sitting room and dining room. To the north of the sitting room is the utility room which has a stone-flag floor which continues into the sitting room. The sitting room has a single roughly-chamfered ceiling beam, fitted cupboards on the west side, and fireplaces at the north and south ends; that to the south has a decoratively-carved and plain painted timber surround with floriated columns and frieze. The fireplace is flanked by a door to a winder staircase on its left and a door through to a short corridor on the right. This leads to the dining room which has a further single ceiling

beam (no chamfer) and a fireplace at the south end. This fireplace is bare timber and decoratively carved and has a cast-iron surround with tiled cheeks and a heavy timber lintel. Again, doors lead to a winder staircase to the left (with a cupboard below) and through to the kitchen to the right. The kitchen has a quarry-tile floor.

The first floor is accessed via steps up to a planked door leading to timber winder staircases located in the eastern corners of the dining room and sitting room. On the first floor are three bedrooms, that to the north being the largest and with a blocked fireplace on the north wall. Between the north bedroom and bedroom two, is a narrow room with a close-studded infilled timber partition on the north wall. The bedrooms have chamfered ceiling beams and elm planked floorboards (some over 30cm wide). Within the attics, accessed by a continuation of the southern winder stair, are large principal rafters and purlins which appear to be early fabric; some common rafters have been replaced.

All internal and cupboard doors are timber ledge and plank, with hand-made wrought-iron fittings including thumb-latches and strap hinges. The opening casement windows also have wrought-iron catches. All other joinery – such as architraves and skirtings – are timber and have simple mouldings.

Sources

Books and journals

Verey, D, Brooks, A, *The Buildings of England, Gloucestershire 1 - The Cotswolds*, (2002), 539-540

Websites

Gloucestershire HER: Ozleworth Park , accessed 24/02/2021

from https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=41706&resourceID=108

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: (Alfred) Charles Tomlinson, accessed 24/02/2021 from <https://doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780198614128.013.110711>

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Sir John Rolt , accessed 24/02/2021 from <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24034>

The Churches Conservation Trust: The Church of St Nicholas of Myra , accessed 24/02/2021 from <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/static/uploaded/0bbd1765-aa03-4d58-acec8a810c9e25eb.pdf>

The Paris Review: Charles Tomlinson, *The Art of Poetry*, No 78 (1998), accessed 24/02/2021 from <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1033/the-art-of-poetry-no-78-charles-tomlinson>

Other

1838 Tithe map of Ozleworth Parish, and apportionment

Jackson Stops Staff auction sales particulars for the Ozleworth Park Estate, 30 July 1947. Historic England Archive ref. SA00735 (part supplied by owner).

Ordnance Survey (1972) (1:2500)

Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire (1882) (1:2500)

Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire (1903) (1:2500)

Ordnance Survey, Gloucestershire (1921) (1:2500)

End of List Description

- 2.2 No changes are proposed to the front of the house which faces the highway and it is this elevation which provides much of its special character. The back of the house and the end gables, to which modest changes are proposed, are very plain and are considered to be of less significance. The rear elevation was not consciously designed and is the result of practical response to need with few openings and no sense of composition.
- 2.3 Some alterations were carried out after 1961 at both ground floor and first floor levels when the two cottages were knocked together. These include very narrow doorways through the former party wall and the provision of simple service and sanitary accommodation. These reflect typical changes in expectations and requirements for kitchens and bathrooms at that time. Such expectations have now moved on. The kitchen is now the focus for family life in most houses. A single downstairs bathroom with access through a sitting room is not considered adequate.
- 2.4 It appears that works were also carried out after 1961 to the roof and the external joinery. The roof was stripped and recovered with stone slates over a plastic roofing membrane (which probably dates from the 1970s) and a significant number of roof timbers were replaced as part of this work. A new window, of poor quality, was installed at the back of the house for the ground floor bathroom and the windows in the front elevation appear to have been renewed.
- 2.5 These new windows have iroko (or other tropical hardwood) frames with steel opening casements and leaded lights, all carefully detailed, and fretwork heads fitted to the windows on the two-storey part. The fretwork heads each have four half-circle cut-outs and they give the entrance elevation a strong character although they are actually rather poorly detailed. Secondary double-glazing forms an integral part of these windows with 4mm Perspex sheets fitted into rebates on the inside.
- 2.6 The setting of the property at the bottom of the Ozleworth Valley immediately below Ozleworth Park is very special. The immediate landscape setting of the house is especially beautiful with simple but carefully laid out cottage gardens at the front. The detached timber garage at one side is not of special interest.
- 2.7 The unnamed road in front of the property, which runs steeply downhill from Lower Lodge on Blacksmith Hill, is a no-through road which serves only this property, Holwell Farm and the adjacent farmland. Ozleworth Bridleway 6 runs from the highway along the north boundary of the property.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Applicants seek consent to make internal and external alterations to the house, to replace the garage and to carry out associated landscaping works. The proposed alterations to the house would improve the quality of the accommodation for the occupants and would include much needed works to the building fabric, particularly with regard to reducing heat loss. The replacement of the garage and associated landscaping works would provide better outbuildings and improve parking and turning arrangements. Whilst there would be some limited loss of historic fabric, careful consideration has been given to minimizing such loss and there would be no adverse effect on the character of the building.

- 3.2 The existing ground floor accommodation comprises two reception rooms and the downstairs bathroom with a utility room and kitchen in each of the single-storey end bays. The location of the bathroom, with access only through one reception room or the other, is impractical for a family house; it would be better replaced upstairs close to the bedrooms and this space used as a study or snug. The kitchen is very small for a house of this size; moving this to one of the reception rooms would provide enough space for dining as well as preparing food. The existing utility room is conveniently located near the parking area to provide an entrance hall with a downstairs lavatory. The existing kitchen is conveniently located to provide a utility room and rear entrance. There is a very narrow doorway between the two original parts of the house; widening this to a minimum clear width of 700mm would increase accessibility for occupants and their visitors.
- 3.3 Some associated alterations are proposed to the exterior at ground floor level. A new pair of glazed doors to the garden from the sitting room would be in the position of an old window opening which has been blocked at some stage. This would provide more natural light within as well as a visual and functional connection with the back garden. A replacement window in the study (former bathroom) would match those on the single-storey end bays. These are plainer than those on the rest of the front elevation, lacking the applied fretwork heads, and thus more appropriate to the rear elevation. A new window of similar design in the kitchen would provide more natural light within and a view into the back garden. A small new window in the downstairs lavatory would provide natural light and ventilation.
- 3.4 The existing first floor accommodation comprises three bedrooms and a large landing, which has been used as a study in the past, but no bathroom. The middle bedroom could be simply subdivided to provide two bathrooms which would each serve bedrooms at either end of the house.
- 3.5 Some associated alterations are proposed to the exterior at first floor level. A new window in the larger bedroom would be in the position of an old window opening which has been blocked at some stage. This would provide more natural light within and provide a view into the back garden and up the valley. A new window in the bathroom at the back of the house would provide natural light and ventilation. These would both match the style of new window proposed on the ground floor.
- 3.6 The existing attic accommodation provides two unlit lofts. These have been used solely for storage purposes by the previous occupants but would almost certainly have provided bedroom accommodation previously. Historic England refer to an old photo with two small rooflights taken before 1947. Each attic is served by its own stairway with a door at the bottom of the flight so there would be no need to provide lobbies or other enclosure at the top.
- 3.7 Some associated alterations are proposed to the exterior at attic floor level. Two carefully detailed dormer windows with hipped stone roofs would provide light and ventilation. These would be located to minimise any adverse effect on surviving historic carpentry. New windows in each of the end gables would provide additional light to the bedrooms. These would both match the style of new window proposed on the ground floor. Gable windows of this type are typical of vernacular cottages.

- 3.8 All the windows, including the new ones, will have traditional leaded lights. The new windows are modelled on the existing ones in the single-storey end bays with simple oak frames, flat steel opening casements and leaded lights. The proportions of the new windows have been carefully considered for each case. The jambs on the dormer windows have been increased in width in order to accommodate the thickness of the dormer cheeks. To improve thermal performance secondary double glazing will be installed to match the existing.
- 3.9 The external walls give little opportunity for improving thermal performance, whether applied inside or outside, without significant loss of character by straightening all the surfaces. In addition, use of any non-oil-based insulants, such as wood-fibre, would require such thickness that details at door frames and window reveals would be compromised. We will rely instead on the thermal mass of the thick walls providing a thermal store despite their theoretically poor thermal performance.
- 3.10 The existing ground floor is very damp. The smaller bay at the north end has stone flags, many badly broken, and patches of concrete at both outer corners. The sitting room has a concrete slab at the north end and stone flags to the remainder which have been covered by bitumen felt. The passage and study (existing bathroom) have concrete slabs. The kitchen has some stone flags at the north end and quarry tiles at the other, all covered by layers of bitumen felt. The smaller bay at the south end has quarry tiles. All sound stone flags would be carefully set aside for reuse.
- 3.11 The ground floor will require insulation and damp proofing. Whilst we would normally propose a breathable construction with limecrete beneath the flagstones in such a building, we consider that a damp proof membrane will be essential in this case. The building is at the bottom of the valley and the water table will be very close to the surface from time to time. This makes the overall depth required for a floor build-up with limecrete on recycled foamed glass (RFG) impractical. The foamed glass insulating layer would simply fill with water, and thus lose its insulating properties, and the very depth of construction would undermine the shallow foundations.
- 3.12 The proposed floor build would rely on a thin concrete blinding for stability beneath a dimpled damp proof membrane which will provide some breathability for both the concrete slab and the base of the walls. Thermal insulation, a concrete slab with underfloor heating matrix and stone flags would be laid over the membrane.
- 3.13 The stone roof covering is in poor condition and the plastic roofing felt precludes any practical means of installing thermal insulation beneath without significant risk of condensation. The roof will be stripped and relaid using salvaged slates and additional slates (of known provenance) imported to make up the inevitable shortfall in salvaged material. To avoid any adverse effect on bats, traditional bituminous felt will be used with multi-foil insulation which will allow the roof covering to follow the contour of the structure beneath.
- 3.14 The replacement outbuilding is in two parts. The first part provides a single garage with double doors at the west end. The second part provides a two-bay open-fronted store where garden furniture and logs can be stored. The building will have a softwood structure, apart from the oak post and beams to the open-fronted section, clad with larch feather-edge boarding.

3.15 The Applicants understand their duty of care and intend to show proper respect for historic building fabric and carry out works in a sympathetic and informed manner so as not to detract from the character and appearance of the property.

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS

4.1 The existing layout will only be affected by the proposals at the north end of the site. The changes to the parking and turning area will provide additional off-road space and make vehicular access safer. Moving the garage further back will enhance the setting of the house from the front and provide additional privacy from the bridleway.

4.2 The overall scale and external appearance will be affected by the proposal but this will not be observed from the highway. Where there is change, at the north end of the site, the character of the house and its setting will remain largely unchanged because the new components will be broadly similar to those being replaced. All external materials proposed are described on the drawings.

4.3 The proposed works will increase the overall volume of the buildings on the site. The volume of the house will increase marginally due to the proposed dormers. The volume of the outbuilding will increase due to the additional storage area proposed.

4.4 The house is set within its own garden. The front of the house faces the highway but the parts affected by these proposals are almost entirely hidden from there. The back of the house is visible from the bridleway and the alterations will be visible from there. The new outbuilding will be visible from several public viewpoints. The Applicants intend to maintain the beautiful gardens which enhance the setting of the house. Good management of existing trees and planting will give protection and screening and continue to provide wildlife habitat.

4.5 The existing vehicular and pedestrian gateways from the unnamed road will be unchanged. These are convenient for all purposes anticipated including by emergency services. The existing turning and parking area will be changed; these are relatively level and will provide space for parking and turning cars within the site. They will continue to be suitable for the proposed use. Ample space for bins and recycling will be provided.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY AND JUSTIFICATION

5.1 This statement describes various phases in the evolution of this house. They should provide sufficient understanding of the history and development of the house to judge that the proposed alterations will not result in an unacceptable loss of significance.

5.2 The proposed development of the house demonstrates the changing significance and practical requirements of different spaces in the home over time. The sitting room and kitchen would benefit from better natural light and improved access and views to the garden. The bathrooms on the first floor would be far more convenient than the existing arrangement. We consider that we have provided a sensitive design to

overcome perceived deficiencies and to provide the type of accommodation which is required.

5.3 One test to be considered is whether the proposals would cause harm. In my opinion they would not do so because both the fabric and the setting of original part of the house would be almost entirely unchanged and so the changes should be allowed. NPPF refers to several principles which are relevant when judging development proposals including the following :

- + alongside scrutiny, the requirement for creativity in finding ways to enhance and improve the places where people live;
- + the aim of securing high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of buildings;
- + energy efficiency in the interests of a transition to a low carbon economy; and
- + conservation in a manner which is appropriate to the significance of the asset so that it can be enjoyed for its contribution to the quality of life for present and future generations.

We would submit that ultimately these particular alterations would accord with these principles and that, in simple terms, the change should be seen as part of the continuing evolution of the house and judged in that context.

If there were harm, which would certainly be less than substantial, we would seek to balance such harm by enhancements elsewhere such as improved energy efficiency.

5.4 Although no longer formally part of current planning guidance, the spirit and intention of Historic England's Conservation Principles are still relevant. They said that not all change is necessarily harmful and advised that:

“New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: There is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;

*The proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
The proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*

The long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future” (paragraph 14).

The design of the proposed alterations has been very carefully considered in the light of the building's character and significance and reflects the vernacular architecture.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The improved accommodation in the house will be the result of creative use of the existing structure. The scale and volume will be barely larger than existing and the changes will have minimal visual impact on its environment. The proposed outbuilding will provide ancillary domestic accommodation to suit the Applicants' needs for covered parking and some service accommodation. The proposed works and landscaping will be sympathetic to their surroundings. The proposed works will have no adverse impact on views from public roads or footpaths.
- 6.2 Materials and elements used in the proposals will match and blend in with the historic structures alongside. The Applicants intend to demonstrate their commitment to using high quality materials throughout in both the conservation of the historic fabric and the development of the new elements.
- 6.3 The Applicants wish to carry out modest alterations to a building which they cherish. These would overcome its deficiencies in terms of accommodation by creating improved spaces so the house and the outbuilding will suit their perceived future needs much better. They understand its special qualities and are sensitive to the need to preserve and enhance this historic building. These proposals represent the minimal scope of work which we consider necessary to achieve the stated aims. Our proposals have been designed to have minimum impact on historic fabric.
- 6.4 The works to the house will provide a viable use in the form of improved domestic accommodation so these proposals will provide the catalyst for significant investment which will help to conserve this heritage asset. The replacement outbuilding will improve the appearance of this end of the site. Creative use of the existing structure of the house will in itself help to reduce carbon emissions by taking advantage of the embodied energy in that structure. Improvements will be designed with energy efficiency in mind with high levels of thermal insulation where appropriate.
- 6.5 Planning policies accord priority to the conservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets including Listed Buildings and AONBs. It is not considered that these proposals would have anything other than a very localised visual impact which would be capable of amelioration through the implementation of a carefully considered landscaping and planting scheme.
- 6.6 The Applicants have carried out neighbour consultations in advance of submitting this planning application.

TF/2128
08.06.22

End of Written Statement