

# Design, Access and Heritage Statement

**Purpose:** To support an application for listed building consent to replacement of cement render on timber frame with lime render and other remedial work to house and curtilage buildings

**Address:** Willow Corner Cottage, Church Road, Wortham, Diss, Suffolk IP22 1PS

**Listing:** Grade II, list entry no. 1032772, first listed 17.11.87

## Description of asset and significance

### *History, form and setting*

Willow Corner Cottage (WCC) is a 16C timber-framed former hall house with late 20C extensions. It is situated on the north side of a roughly square plot adjoining Church Road on the east side (Plan 1, Photo 1).

The 16-17C footprint is largely preserved in the east part of the house, comprising former parlour, hall and service end, with back-to-back inglenook fireplaces between the parlour and hall, and the staircase and front (south) door in the position of the former cross passage between the hall and service end (Plan 4).

Internally, most of the timber frame survives and is exposed (Photos 2-9). Other features of special interest include the head of a 16C rear (north) door head under the stairs (Photos 10, 11), chamfered beams and bressumers, carpenters' marks, "witches' mark" carvings and scorch marks, a shutter groove above one window, and three filled-in mullion window frames.

The whole exterior has plain white cement render with black detailing (Photos 1, 27-31). It is not known what fills the timber frame beneath the render (although some clay lump infill of unknown date is visible under the stairs inside). The roof is 20C and pantiled. UPVC double glazing was installed by previous owners before listing.

The curtilage includes a shed and garage of unknown date, but no earlier than 1870 and no later than 1964 (Plans 2 and 3). The shed is roughly in the centre of the site (Photos 12-17). It has brick walls with two wooden doors facing east. The south part (with pantiled roof) appears more recent than the north part (with corrugated iron roof). The garage is in the south-east corner of the plot with a short driveway (Photos 18-21). The east part of the walls is clay lump with the outline of a gable, suggesting that the building has been extended to the west, where the walls are brick. The roof is pantiled.

WCC is currently the last building in the hamlet of Long Green on the west side of Church Road (subject to proposal DC/22/02774 to build three houses immediately north of the site). Side-on to the road, it bookends the historic line of settlement running along the north side of Long Green, which is a non-designated heritage asset, to the northern tip of the Green's distinctive arrowhead shape.

### *Assessment of significance*

The heritage significance of Willow Corner Cottage lies in its:

- Architecture, as a surviving 16C hall house with the features of special interest.
- Setting in the context of Long Green's settlement pattern.
- History, which contributes to understanding social development in the village. The house is one of those painted and described by the Revd Richard Cobbold, vicar of Wortham, in 1870.

# Design, impact and justification of proposals

## *Description of proposed works*

### House (16C part, Plan 4):

- Remove internal gypsum plaster below sole plate in study (former parlour), and other areas if necessary, to inspect timbers underneath and allow to dry out (Photo 22). If necessary, repair or replace with new well seasoned air-dried oak timbers. Apply lime plaster.
- Remove external cement render from south, east and north elevations (Photos 1, 27-31). Inspect timbers underneath. If necessary, repair or replace with new well seasoned air-dried oak timbers. Apply swan oak lath to apply render or Savolit wood wool board using stainless steel fixings. If required, apply sheep's wool insulation. Apply lime fibre chalk render in 2 coats, finishing at 25mm thick.
- Remove cement render/pointing and as much bitumen as possible from brick plinths (Photos 1, 27, 31, 32). Repoint with NHL 2 lime and well graded sharp sand, or re-render with NHL 2 lime.
- Apply breathable paint to internal lime plaster and external lime render.
- Remove section of shelving adjacent to 16C doorhead under the stairs so that the doorhead can be appreciated (Photos 10, 11). Install pole and curtain opposite doorhead to conceal remaining shelving under stairs.

### House (20C part, Plan 4):

- Fill cracks in cement render (e.g. Photos 1, 29).
- Apply paint to match 16C part.

### House (all):

- If necessary, install French drain (with 20mm gravel) along the south and west elevations (Photo 1).
- Repair or replace rotten timber fascias and barge boards and rotten timber to conservatory (e.g. Photos 34-37).

### Garage (Plan 3):

- Join clay lump section of north wall to brickwork using steel pins to stabilise (Photos 18, 19).
- Replace rotten door and frame on west side (Photo 20).
- Replace rotten window frame and missing glass in small opening on south side (Photo 21).

### Shed (Plan 3):

- Join cracked brickwork using steel pins to stabilise (Photos 13, 14).
- Replace 2 rotten doors and frames on east side (Photos 16, 17).
- Replace 2 rotten windows, frames and cills on west side (Photo 14).
- Replace rotten barge board (Photo 14).
- Replace plastic (staggered) guttering and downpipes on west side to provide a continuous run (Photo 13).
- Replace corrugated iron roof on north part with pantiles (Photo 15).

## *Design principles and working methods*

The bulk of the work will be carried out by The Green Man Building Company Limited of Watton, Norfolk, who are restoration, conservation and lime specialists and members of the Guild of Master Craftsmen.

The re-rendering of the timber frame will be carried out one elevation at a time so that the condition of the timber frame and infill can be assessed and appropriate treatment agreed and budget confirmed at each stage.

A minimal intervention policy will be operated, so that fabric will not be altered or removed that is deemed to be sound and have a useful life.

The work will be carried out using the materials listed in the application form. The re-rendering of the timber frame will be carried out using traditional materials and methods. No cement-based products or ferrous fixings will be used.

Photographs will be taken before, during and after the works. Any significant features uncovered during the works will be brought to our attention and reported to the Heritage Team.

### *Access*

The proposed works will not affect access to WCC or the curtilage buildings.

### *Impact and justification of proposed work*

A building survey in November 2020 identified issues requiring remedial work including the following:

- Render cracks (e.g. Photos 27-30).
- Wood rot in windows, doors and joinery (e.g. Photos 33-37).
- Significant rising damp, with signs of wood rot to ground floor skirting and lower parts of timber frame and sole plate. The surveyor advised verbally that the lower part of the south wall of the study was the most seriously affected (Plan 4, Photo 22).
- Presence of wood-boring insects, whether or not currently active.

The survey also identified structural and material decline in the curtilage buildings and recommended demolishing and replacing the garage and repairing the shed, as a result of which our insurers will not currently cover these buildings. However, we would currently prefer to retain and repair both buildings to an insurable standard.

Since we moved into WCC in February 2021, damp patches have appeared in the study and wood-boring insect frass has appeared below the sole plate in the study (e.g. Photos 23-26).

The main purpose of the proposed works is to conserve and protect the house and curtilage buildings, in particular by protecting the timber frame from the damage that can be caused by non-breathable cement render trapping moisture.

We therefore believe that the proposed works will preserve the heritage significance of WCC, by protecting its architecture and reducing the risk of future harm.

### *Further information and site visits*

We would be happy to provide any further information required and to receive site visits before, during and after the works (including for educational purposes).

## **Sources**

Official list entry no. 1032772.

Suffolk Historic Environment Record.

Building Survey Report, Nash & Co, 16 November 2020.

Cobbold's Wortham: The Portrait of a Victorian Village, ed. Sue Heaser, Farthings Publishing, 2019.

The Biography of a Victorian Village, ed. Ronald Fletcher, Batsford, ISBN 0-7134-0787-5 (1977).

Willow Corner Cottage, Circa 1525-1550, Notes on an assessment by Leigh Alston, Architectural Historian, 11 June 1998.

Aerial photographs by Skyviews dated Summer 1964, 1977 and 1981.

Statement prepared by Carol and Neil Kewley  
23 August 2022

