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Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement

In support of planning application for

Proposed demolitions (removal of existing tiled roof structures), two-storey side extension (east) to enlarge kitchen/dining space and first floor bedroom, single-storey side extension (northeast) to facilitate relocation of existing (form new) staircase and enlargement of existing utility room, addition of new zinc clad roof forms above existing and extended ground floor plan and general external material alterations.

At

Lincolns, Strethall, Saffron Walden, CB11 4XJ.



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1.SUMMARY OF WORKS

Proposed demolitions (removal of existing tiled roof structures), two-storey side extension (east) to enlarge kitchen/dining space and first floor bedroom, single-storey side extension (northeast) to facilitate relocation of existing (form new) staircase and enlargement of existing utility room, addition of new zinc clad roof forms above existing and extended ground floor plan and general external material alterations.

2.INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by Tom Cross Architectural Design and Landscape on behalf of Mr & Mrs R. Pope, to support Householder and Listed Buildings planning application for new works proposed at Lincolns, Strethall, Saffron Walden, Essex.

The application is submitted in full with all matters to be considered.

3.SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located approximately 350m to the west of the village hamlet of Catmere End, approximately 3km WNW of the market town of Saffron Walden, Essex.

The proposal site has rectangular form of approximate dimensions 20m x 60m orientated south-north along its long axis. The site is bounded to the north and east by a neighbouring residential garden and tennis court, to the south by an unclassified road, to the west by an unmetalled access track and to the north-west by a cluster of private dwellings.

Principal built development on site comprises a grade ii listed detached dwelling house (located north) and a modest single garage outbuilding on the west boundary. Amenity space is characterised by established and well-maintained gardens of traditional English cottage style, with a vegetable plot to the east boundary and a pond to the south.

The historic dwelling of 'Lincolns' is characterised by its single-storey rectangular form and thatched roof with low eaves. At ground floor level the historic cottage's external walls are clad in horizontal oak weather-boarding (north and west) and are constructed of soft red brick masonry(south). The gable end (west) at first floor level is clad in horizontal oak weather-boarding. Thatched eyebrow dormers are located centrally on both front and rear elevations. A late 20th century single-storey timber frame extension (east) is clad in oak boarding with oak windows and doors and has dual-pitched roofs finished in plain red clay tiles.

4.SITE CONSTRAINTS

The dwelling of Lincolns is grade ii listed - listing entry number 1221593. Historic England listing information describes the dwelling as:

'Small C17-C18 building faced in red brick. Renovated, with modern casement windows. One storey and attics. At the west end a modern oriel window has been inserted in the gable. Roof thatched, with an external stack at the east end.'

Two other listed dwellings are found within the proposal sites immediate setting:

- Pedlar's cottage –grade ii listed (listing entry number 1275080)
- Manor cottage –grade ii listed (listing entry number 1221592)

While it is suggested by Historic England that Pedlars cottage was likely constructed around the same time as Lincolns, Manor cottage possibly predates both by as much as a century.

5.RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

UTT/0079/03/FUL
UTT/0080/03/LB

Above planning approvals granted the implementation of existing oak clad extension previously mentioned.

UTT/21/1822/LB –withdrawn

6.CONSULTATIONS – no pre-app undertaken.

7.SCHEME PROPOSALS

New proposals contained within this application seek to enhance accommodation formerly approved and implemented under above app refs UTT/0079/03/FUL & UTT/0080/03/LB.

Two-storey side extension –Approx. dimensions 1.0m x 4.8m

A 1.0m extension (east) is proposed to enlarge the existing ground-floor kitchen/dining space and bedroom at first-floor (above). The proposed two-storey extension facilitates a revised kitchen layout which allows the introduction of a centrally located east facing window, providing views of an existing kitchen garden (east). Increased glazing to the east elevation will raise natural lighting levels generally with occupants benefiting from increased morning sunlight provision. At first-floor level proposals include the introduction of glazing to the gable ‘apex’ (sill height 1500mm above existing floor level) to improve natural lighting of the bedroom area. All areas of two-storey extension to be clad and detailed in hardwood timber.

Single-storey side extension (east) - Approx. dims 0.5m x 3.5m.

The extension is proposed primarily to facilitate relocation of the existing kitchen staircase to an area of the current entrance hall, rising into an area of the first-floor currently utilised as cupboard/storage space. The proposed extension also creates additional space at ground floor level to enlarge an existing utility area.

New seamed zinc clad arched roof structures –

New arched roof forms are proposed to replace the current dual-pitch tiled roof structures (forms approved under app refs UTT/0079/03/FUL & UTT/0080/03/LB), principally to increase useable habitable space at first-floor level, currently highly restricted due to low eaves.

Arched (rounded) forms with deep narrowing verges are proposed to echo the curvilinear homogenous form of the adjacent thatched roof to the historic dwelling. The apex heights of the new roof forms are proposed to match the ridge heights of the existing tiles dual-pitched roof structures.

8.USE - Residential.

9.Current building constraints and proposed solutions

a) Useable floor space

All first-floor rooms in Lincolns are situated within roof space. The sloping ceilings extend fully from apex to floor level - hence there are no flank walls. This means that less than half the theoretical floor

area is usable i.e. greater than half the floor area at first floor level has head height below the adopted minimum (1.8m).

Because the 2003 extension was built with a ridge height 1.4m below the ridge height of the existing thatch, yet with eaves at the same level, the available accommodation, in what is the main bedroom, is even more constrained than the space within the original structure under the thatch. With no flank walls there is also no available space for bedroom furniture above 900mm in height. In the principal bedroom (above the kitchen), in practical terms, there is very little floor area on which to stand up fully as the only potential space is taken up by the bed. The same situation is found in the current dressing room.

The proposed scheme, requiring only very modest additional ground floor footprint, will double the available full height floor area in both the main bedroom and dressing room. This doubling of available floor space will greatly improve basic living conditions.

b) Kitchen/Bedroom separation

Access to the main bedroom is provided by a staircase extending directly from the ground floor kitchen. There is no compartmental separation between kitchen and bedroom and therefore the following constraints exist:

1. Smells from the kitchen readily pervade the bedroom;
2. There is no acoustic separation between ground and first floor, so kitchen appliances (principally a fridge/freezer) create disturbance at night;
3. There is an enhanced risk to occupants of the bedroom as no means of escape in the event of a fire exists, with the threat of a rapid spread of smoke and fire a genuine fear.

The additional staircase created by the proposed development will adequately address all of these issues, with the additional ground floor footprint required to achieve being no greater than 0.6 m².

10. Addressing the Built Heritage Advice provided by Place Services in response to application UTT/21/1822/LB (subsequently withdrawn)

Attention has been given to the advice provided by Place Services in respect of the design submitted with UTT/21/1822/LB. The comments of Place Services, the response to those comments and/or the measures taken to address them are as follows:

a) Over domestication and desire for agricultural appearance

The Heritage Officer consistently referred to the original listed building - and even the previous extension - as being undomestic in character and of agricultural appearance. There is continual reference to the extension proposed in application UTT/21/1822/LB being 'over-domesticated.'

It should be made clear that this part of Strethall is only made up of domestic dwellings - four in total, including Lincolns - and there is no history of any agricultural buildings in this part of the hamlet at the end of Strethall Lane. The nearest known building historically relating to agriculture is Ryders, as noted on the location plan, which was once known as Ryders Farm. However, even this building has been occupied solely as a domestic dwelling since the farm fell into disuse in the early 19th century.

Lincolns has been owned and occupied solely as a domestic dwelling since at least the mid-19th century and there is no written record of it having ever been an agricultural building. There is no reason why Lincolns, or any of the other 3 neighbouring dwellings, should be considered, or restricted to, having an agricultural appearance. They are not, and never have been, agricultural buildings and any reference to 'over domestication' is mis-guided within this purely residential setting. Refusing an application on the grounds that it is 'domesticated' ignores the residential usage and setting of the building and denies a homeowner the full benefit and proper enjoyment of their house as a domestic residence.

Notwithstanding the above comments, it will be noted in point 3 - regarding proposed use of materials - that much consideration has been given to meeting the desire of the Heritage Officer to achieve a more 'agricultural' appearance.

b) The Heritage Officer refers to:

i) the 'small volume of the listed building' and ii) the 'constrained land of the site.'

i) The small volume of the listed building

In fact, the original listed building occupies a footprint of 60m², compared with a current extended area of 40m². The ridge height of the original is 1.4m greater than the ridge of the proposed extension, meaning that, in terms of volume, the original thatched dwelling will remain at least 1.5 times greater than the combined volume of the previous (2003) and now newly proposed additions.

ii) The constrained land of the site

Lincolns sits in a curtilage of 0.3 acres and although on the edge of the site, cannot be considered constrained. The proposed extension remains 2m from a boundary with neighbouring land –usually considered perfectly acceptable within a domestic setting –and the nearest neighbouring residence is circa 50m distance from the proposed extension.

Notwithstanding the above, the following comments of the Heritage Officer are accepted and measures have been taken to address them as follows:

c) Dormer window

Comment:

“The addition of a large box dormer at first floor, curtain wall glazed garden room would outcompete the existing small eyebrow dormer under thatch, greatly increasing the quantity of glazing to this south elevation, which would detract from the historic vernacular architectural character of the listed building.”

Response:

The large box dormer formerly proposed to the heritage assets rear elevation has been omitted and replaced with a significantly smaller dormer window incorporating low-level glazing. This new dormer relates to the ground-floor window below it and now echoes - albeit in a contemporary fashion - the character and form of the adjacent historic thatched eye-brow window. No glazing is proposed to the cheeks of the new dormer.

d) Stair Extension

Comment:

“The proposed awkward piecemeal stair extension and triangular window to the east gable at first floor would over complicate the simple semi-agricultural appearance of the extension and over domesticate it through this awkward detailing.”

Response:

The comments regarding agricultural appearance and domestication of the dwelling have been addressed above.

Nevertheless, the suggestion of 'awkward, piecemeal design' is intended to be dealt with by extending the eastern elevation of the northern element of the 2003 addition along its entire length - thus creating a simplified straight elevation - in place of the formerly proposed stepped arrangement. In doing so, the resulting enlargement of the ground floor also provides the heritage asset with an enlarged utility room, much needed by the current owners.

It should be noted that the Heritage Officer was content with the design of the new kitchen extension and the redesign of the ground floor has been revised to follow the same principle.

The newly proposed straight elevation extension allows the area of the entrance hall, WC/shower room and enlarged utility room to be covered by a simple asymmetric arched and gabled roof form, with an apex height to match the current ridge height of the existing dual pitched tiled roof structure.

11. REVISED MATERIALS

The plain clay tiles covering the 2003 addition are vernacular to the region but they fail to add any architectural merit to the appearance of the dwelling or compliment the historic thatched roof in any way. In particular, the chunky, over-engineered appearance of these heavy gauge roof tiles, on such a relatively small extension, jars with the light, homogenous aspect of the thatch.

It is proposed that the new roof covering be clad in zinc with standing seams comprised of narrow profile panels. The smooth face and crisp lines of the zinc panels, in combination with the newly proposed arched roof forms, will ideally compliment the smooth, uniform aspect of the thatch but at the same time offer a much-needed contemporary contrast to a traditional rustic material.

It will be appreciated that the common material used for covering agricultural buildings throughout Essex and beyond is sheet metal of one form or another, either corrugated or flat. The use of standing seam zinc panels to cover the modern additions will therefore give a nod to the agricultural use of such material and at the same time step away from the use of other materials, such as plain tiles, that are typical of a domesticated residence.

Notwithstanding the response in 2. a) above, the Heritage Officer's desire for an 'agricultural' appearance and an avoidance of 'over-domestication' should thereby be satisfied with this revised proposal.

Currently, the cladding material to the elevations of both the historic cottage and the 2003 extension are of broad width horizontal oak panels. To be clear, across two adjoining elevations there is no material differentiation/separation between the historic and the contemporary.

To address this anomaly, it is proposed that a new vertical cladding material is introduced. This will be Oak and of smaller section size than the existing. This material will not only be used for the new two-storey extension, but it will also replace the existing horizontal boarding of the 2003 extension where it is proposed for this to be retained.

New front door and frame to be bespoke joined oak. All other new windows and doors to be composite powder coated Aluminium (externally) and hardwood double-glazed (internally). Rooflights to be Velux Conservation type.

The external walls of the smaller 2003 extension as well as the extended areas of this element are to be finished in coloured rendered (as indicated on drawings).

Hence, this proposal will ensure that there is clear acknowledgement of the contemporary nature of both additions relevant to the original historic structure.

12. SCALE / AMOUNT

In terms of volume, the original dwelling provides 240m³ of potential living space –but is subject to the constraints referred to in point 1. a). The 2003 extension comprises a further 150m³. Now that the garden room has been omitted, the addition proposed by this application will add a modest 30m³ approx. of volume on a ground area of no more than 6.0m².

In terms of area, the proposed addition will add just 6.0m² of building footprint to an existing building area of 100m².

The proportions of new build to historic building will remain substantially the same (an addition to the 2003 extension area of just 6%) as this application is centred on making the existing spaces practicable and liveable - by creating additional living space within an otherwise constrained and wasted volume of space below 1.8m head height –rather than by adding new build volume on new foundations.

The principal ridge height (the tallest) of the 2003 addition is set 1.4m below the ridge height of the original thatch with the apex height of the newly proposed roof form being the same. The smooth lines

and careful angular detailing of the new arched roof gables, sitting well below that of the original - compared with the large bulk of thatch over such a long elevation - provides an addition that will be distinctly subservient to the original, yet will serve to complement and subtly contrast with the larger scaled and rustic nature of the historic original.

13.APPEARANCE

The newly proposed design is of a contemporary nature to contrast with and compliment the rustic appearance of the thatch. Zinc is a material that has been used in buildings for 200 years yet the clean crisp lines of the panels, coupled with the asymmetry of the gables, will clearly demarcate the historic from the contemporary, whilst providing an important and worthwhile addition of greater architectural merit than both the existing 2003 extension and the extension proposed in application UTT/21/1822/LB.

The addition of narrow width oak boarding and coloured render to the elevations provide an elegant contrast to the wider soft red brick masonry and oak boarding under the thatch.

14.LANDSCAPING

To match the existing. New/ revised hard landscaping areas to be realised through reuse of existing materials removed to facilitate proposed extension works.

15.PARKING PROVISION - Unchanged. N/a.

16.ACCESS - Unchanged. N/a.

17.HERITAGE STATEMENT

Heritage asset and assessment of historic significance

Lincolns is an example of a masonry dwelling with thatched roof found in abundance in South Cambridgeshire and Northwest Essex. Within the immediate surroundings of Saffron Walden historic buildings are predominantly timber framed and rendered, making Lincolns a heritage asset of reasonable significance within this north-western corner of Essex.

Since Lincolns was extended in the early 2000's the property has been well maintained and is therefore considered to be of amenity value to the setting and hamlet of Strethall.

It is acknowledged that new development proposed within the setting of Lincolns must take the above into account.

Assessment of impact of proposed works

Two storey side extension (east) to enlarge existing kitchen and first floor bedroom, single-storey extension to form new staircase from existing ground floor entrance hall and arched roof forms.

The proposed extension represents a minor enlargement of an existing formerly approved addition.

In terms of both volume and roof height the addition proposed remains subservient to the historic thatched cottage.

The multi-faceted interest generated by the asymmetric arched roof form, sitting at the same height as the 2003 addition, combined with the choice of contemporary smooth profiled zinc roof finish, will greatly improve the visual aspect of Lincolns from both its garden (south) and the adjacent residential garden (east). The choice of cladding material creates a clear and necessary distinction between the vernacular architecture of the existing original historic asset and proposed contemporary alterations and additions.

For the above reasons the impact of the proposed addition on the heritage asset is considered negligible. In relation to the 2003 extension, it is considered that the current proposals will

correct/improve many of the shortcomings that resulted from poor choice of materials and uninspiring design.

New dormer window structure to existing first floor bedroom roof slope (south)

A large dominant feature of the previous application now reduced in the current proposal to a modest (small) element.

Single storey extension (rear) to create garden room off kitchen dining room

A feature of the previous application now omitted in its entirety.

Mitigation of impact

The newly designed single-storey side extension (east) is proposed to create the minimum space required to form a new staircase for residential use i.e. to facilitate 1.9m min. head height to staircase winder at eaves (adjacent external wall) and 2.0m above all treads and at first floor landing.

Furthermore, the additional building footprint proposed to facilitate the above, plus kitchen enlargement, represents an increase in ground floor area of only 6.0m², an addition to the existing building's footprint of 6%.

Wide section size oak cladding to the 2003 addition will be replaced with narrow section vertical oak cladding and coloured render. These materials will assist in creating a clear separation between the original and historic heritage asset and the contemporary alteration of the existing 2003 extension and newly proposed extensions, a situation currently not apparent, especially when the dwelling is viewed from its frontage (driveway area).

Much of the new roof structure now proposed is contained within the small space encapsulated within the existing elevational boundary and ridge line of the 2003 addition –the additional and improved habitable area at first floor being almost entirely created over the existing footprint of the current existing structure.

The contemporary use of zinc to clad the proposed arched roof forms, also as a replacement to the clay tiles covering the 2003 addition, will counter the vernacular aspect of the thatch and in doing so inform a clear distinction between the historic and 20th century parts of the dwelling, thereby removing any ambiguity, yet at the same time allowing the smooth profile of the zinc to complement the homogenous form of the thatch.

For the reasons outlined in this document we commend this proposal as being entirely appropriate and look forward to implementing it in its entirety.

16.PHOTOS



Unmetalled road from south (looking north). Garage and access front right.



Unclassified road to south of proposal site (looking east)



Pedlar's Cottage



Manor Cottage



Driveway and front door approaches from west



Front elevation and historic front entrance



Junction of historic cottage and earlier extension



Gardens to east of earlier extension



2003 extension from east



Earlier extension from south



Rear elevation from southeast



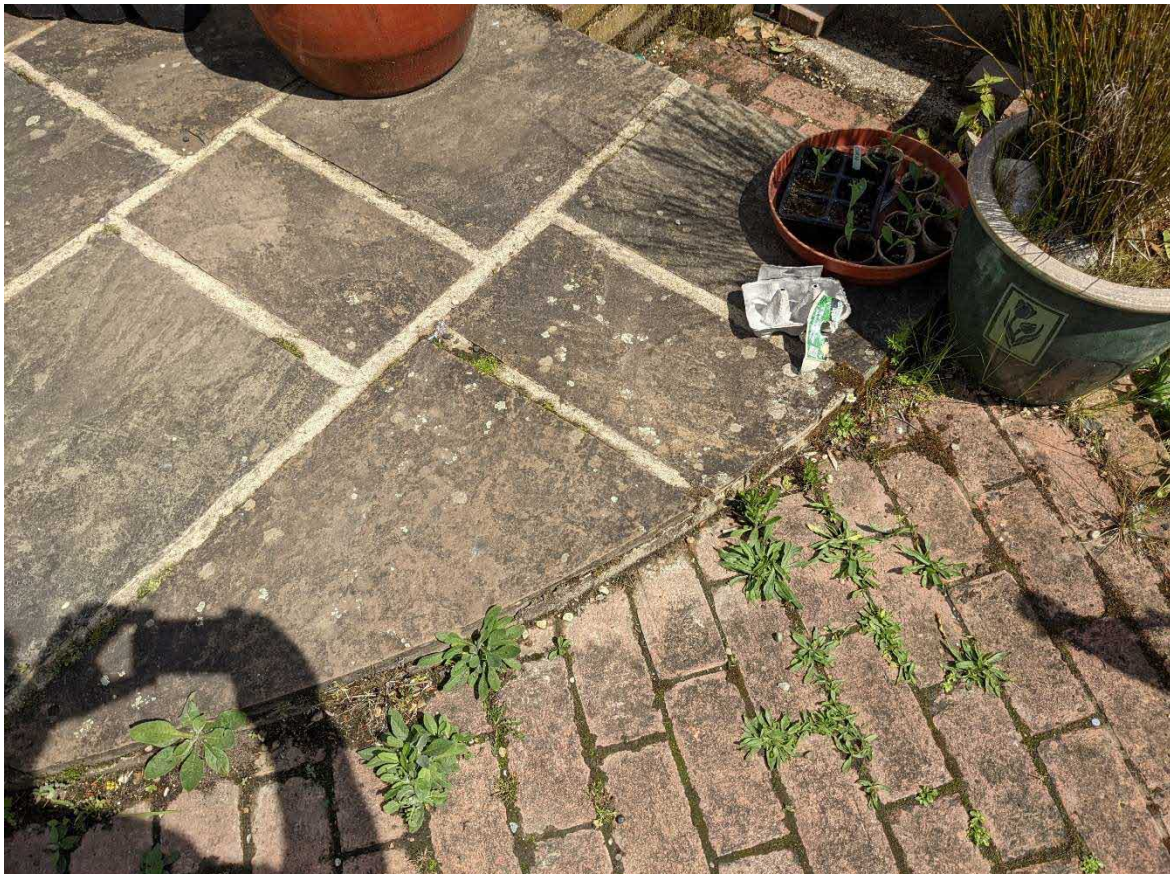
Rear masonry wall of historic dwelling



Pond (south)



Garden –House centre / garage left



Existing hard-landscaping



Softwood rafter feet/ends and oak boarding