

Sowley House Cottage Design Statement

August 2022

Sowley House Cottage

1880A

Sowley, nr. Lymington

Hampshire, England

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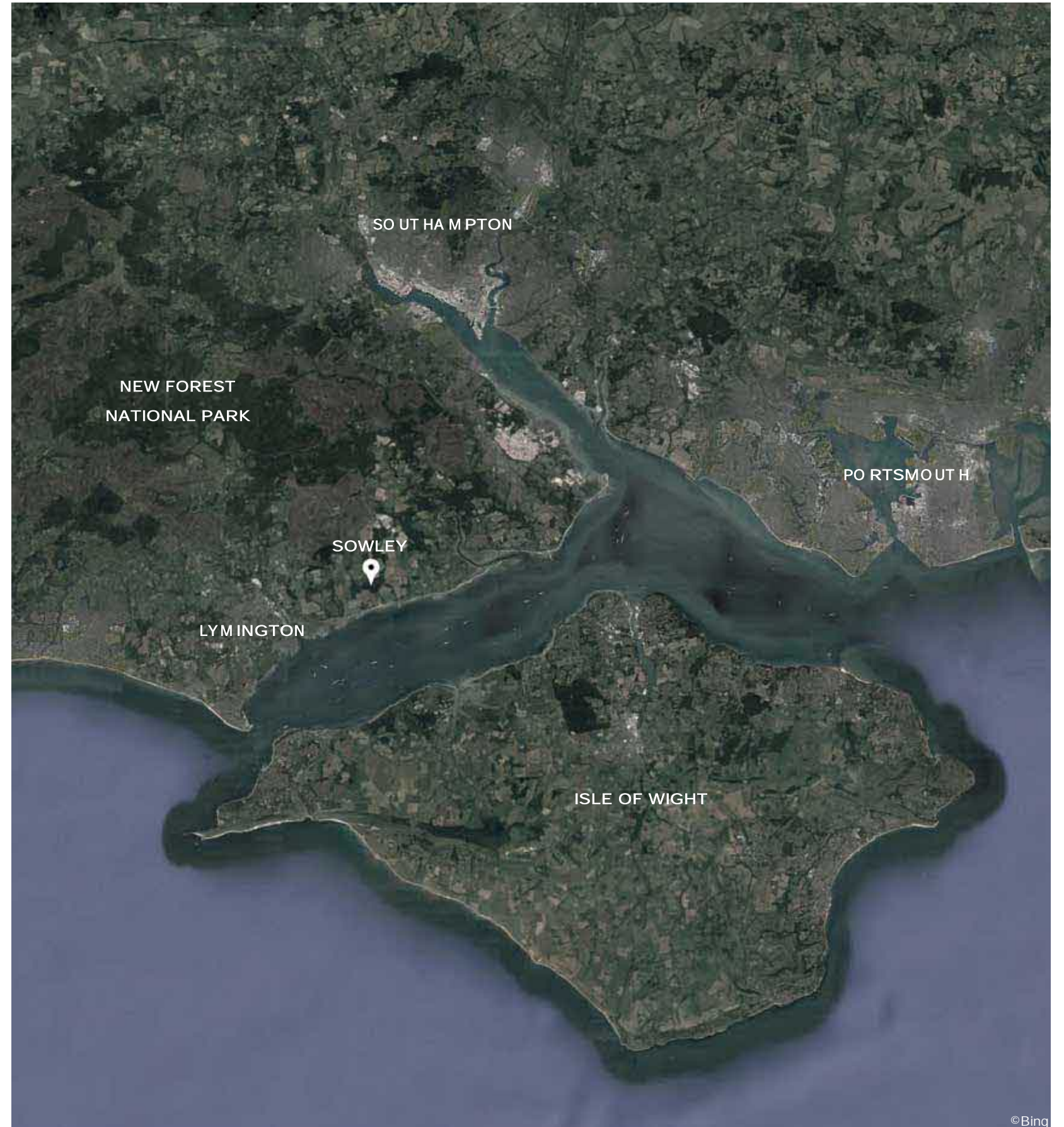


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Introduction Site



Introduction

Site

The Site

The Sowley property is in Hampshire, 4.5 miles east of Lymington and within the New Forest National Park and Beaulieu Parish.

The site itself runs North West - South East, comprising two domestic properties and various ancillary buildings in the NE corner, the Sowley Marshes to the West and part of the Solent foreshore along the South edge of the site.

The wetland areas are part of the Hurst Castle & Lymington River estuary SSSI, Solent & Southampton Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and South East MMO. The Sowley Pond and New Forest SSSIs lie to the North.

Ownership

The property in its entirety was purchased in 1985 by the van der Vorm family. They live in the main house and rent out the cottage.

The property includes the main House, Cottage & garage block, a greenhouse, a garden shed, a pool & pool house and C18th privy set within ~42 acres, including a walled garden, Sowley Marsh, various ponds and the shoreline.

— Boundary of Ownership



Historical Background Beaulieu

Introduction

The following briefly details the main historical aspects of Sowley and the surrounding area.

Beaulieu

Beaulieu Abbey was founded by Cistercian monks after King John granted them the lands of *Bellus Locus* in 1204. Sowley formed part of their estates, described in the Domesday Book as ‘.a hamlet 5½ miles to the south-west of Beaulieu. From the large pond there the abbey fish-ponds were stocked.’

Following the dissolution of the monasteries initiated by Henry VIII, the abbey and surrounding estate were sold in 1538 to Thomas Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton.

Iron Works

To the north of Sowley lies Sowley Pond. Records show that the pond was initially dammed by the monks of Beaulieu to provide fish for the Abbey. This water source was later enlarged and used to power the iron works on the south-eastern edge of the pond, which are first referenced in 1605 and worked until 1769. They were briefly reinstated during the Napoleonic War, but finally closed in 1822. Much of the iron ore used was sourced from the surrounding shore of what is now Sowley House, where iron stone washed up on to the beach.



1797



1897

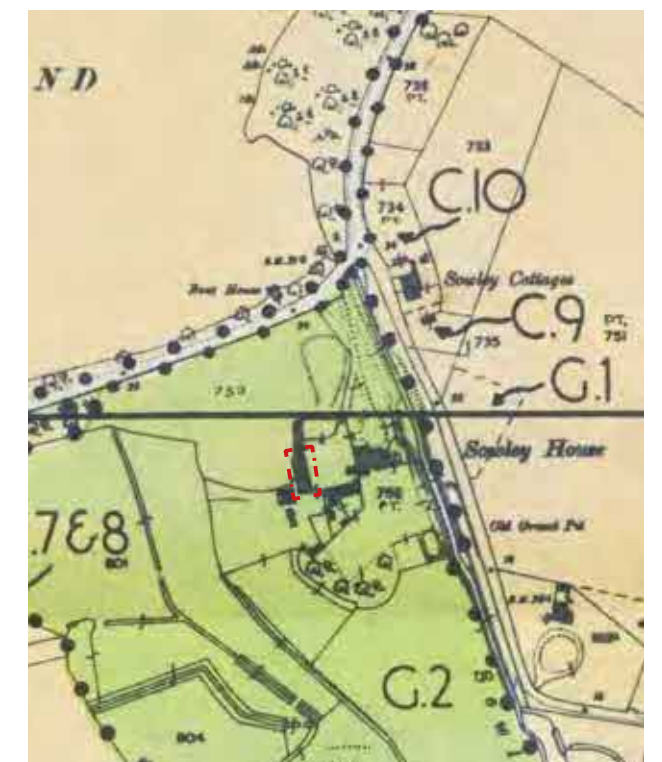
--- Sowley Cottage

Images: all Ordnance Survey
1 : British Library
2, 3: NLS
4: Hampshire Record Office

1866



1907



Historical Background

Sowley

Historical Ownership

The main house is believed to have been built in 1815 replacing an earlier structure, although early research indicates the core building may have existed a few years earlier. The stables and coach house - latterly known as Sowley House Cottage - were built around 1856. 1866 Ordnance Survey maps show both buildings in situ, at which point the property was named 'Sowley Farm'.

The property was renamed 'Sowley House' at some point between late 1897 and 1907, when the title of 'farm house' was transferred to a neighbouring property to the West. This may coincide with the purchase of the property by Lord Coke (Thomas William, 4 Earl of Leicester, Viscount Coke), a distant cousin of the Montagus of Beaulieu. The family lived at Sowley from 1909 to 1944 when not in London. During the World War period the buildings acted as family storage as the estate was not requisitioned.

In 1946 the new owner, Sir Henry Spurrier, Chairman of Leyland Motors, installed bathrooms and an internal secure safe for storing his guns in Sowley house. He used Sowley as both a home and a hunting lodge.

In May 1958, Beaulieu Estate sold Sowley House and Estate to Leyland Motors, which set up an operating subsidiary, Sowley Estates Ltd. Sowley Estates Ltd.

sold Sowley House to Sir Henry and Lady Spurrier in 1962 and repurchased it from them in 1964, when the particulars included a further 'garage for 5 cars'.

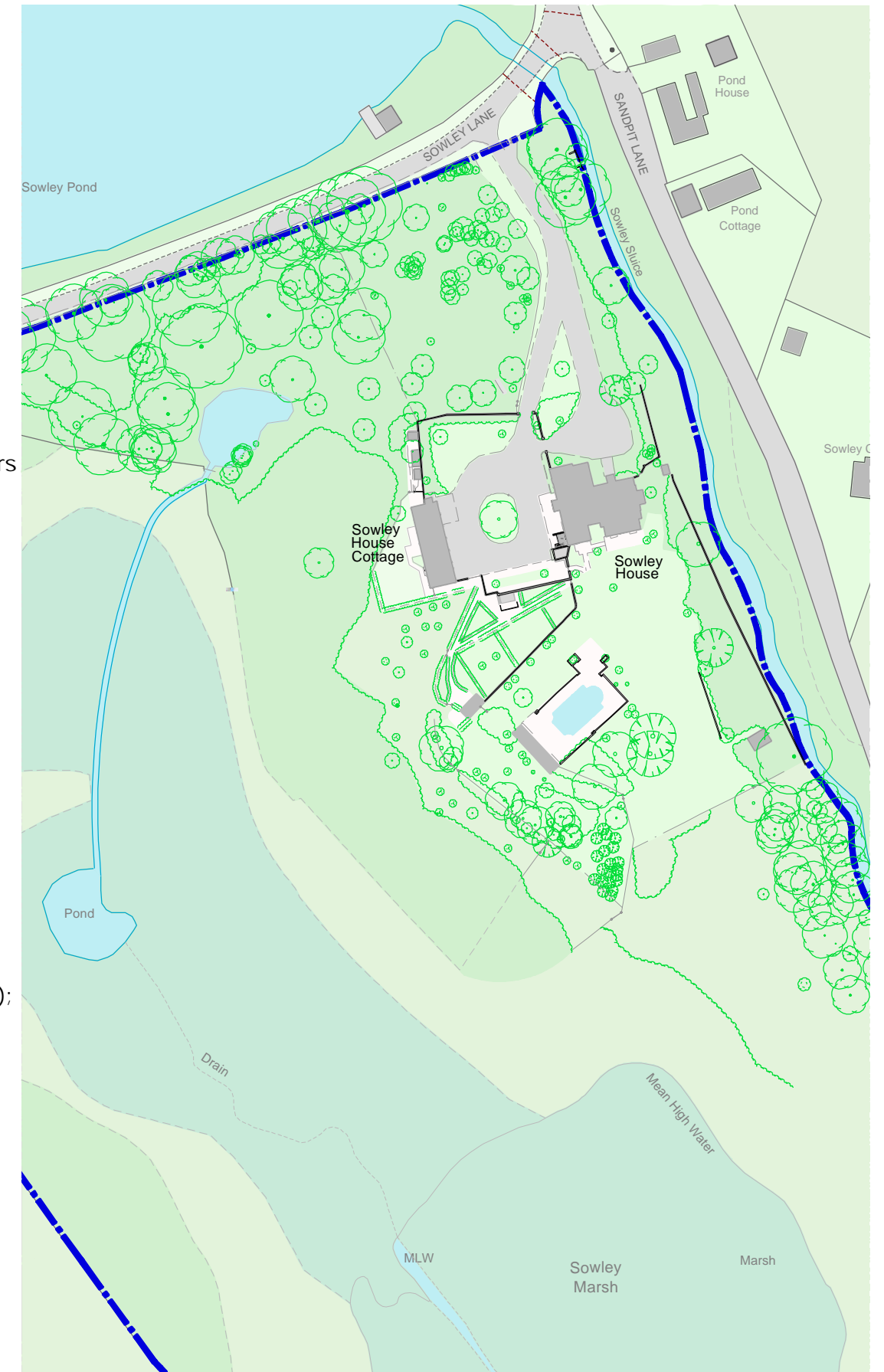
Sowley was sold again by Leyland Motors to W. F. Hammond in 1964, who lived here with his family until the current owners bought the property from him in 1985.

Work to the property:

Ordnance Survey maps and estate sales suggests that there have been various additions and extensions to the property over time.

These once included:

- c.18th century brick privy with outlet into the eastern stream known as 'Sowley sluice' running from Sowley Pond to the Solent;
- Stables & coach house with accommodation c.1856;
- Large outhouse with loft & 5 garages c.1900 (demolished);
- Development of a walled garden;
- Two lean-to heated Greenhouses (one remaining);
- Garden shed, c.1960s;
- Pool and pool house, c.1960s, now in use as a studio.



Condition

Description and Condition

The Cottage has been continually used as a separate dwelling with integral garages, stables and a workshop since it was constructed around 1856, and separately identified on each subsequent census. An examination of the building construction and records suggests that the offices & living quarters originally encompassed either one or two southern-most rooms on the ground floor and the whole attic floor.

The walls are built in red brick in traditional Sussex Bond. The steep roof is clad in terracotta roof tiles and houses the upper floor, with two large central dormers - one gabled, one hipped - creating extra head room. The principal façade (east) is made up of 6 arches - 4 double doorways & 2 inset high-level windows - and an entrance door, plus a central dormer.

An inspection and report by the Structural Engineer noted that, externally:

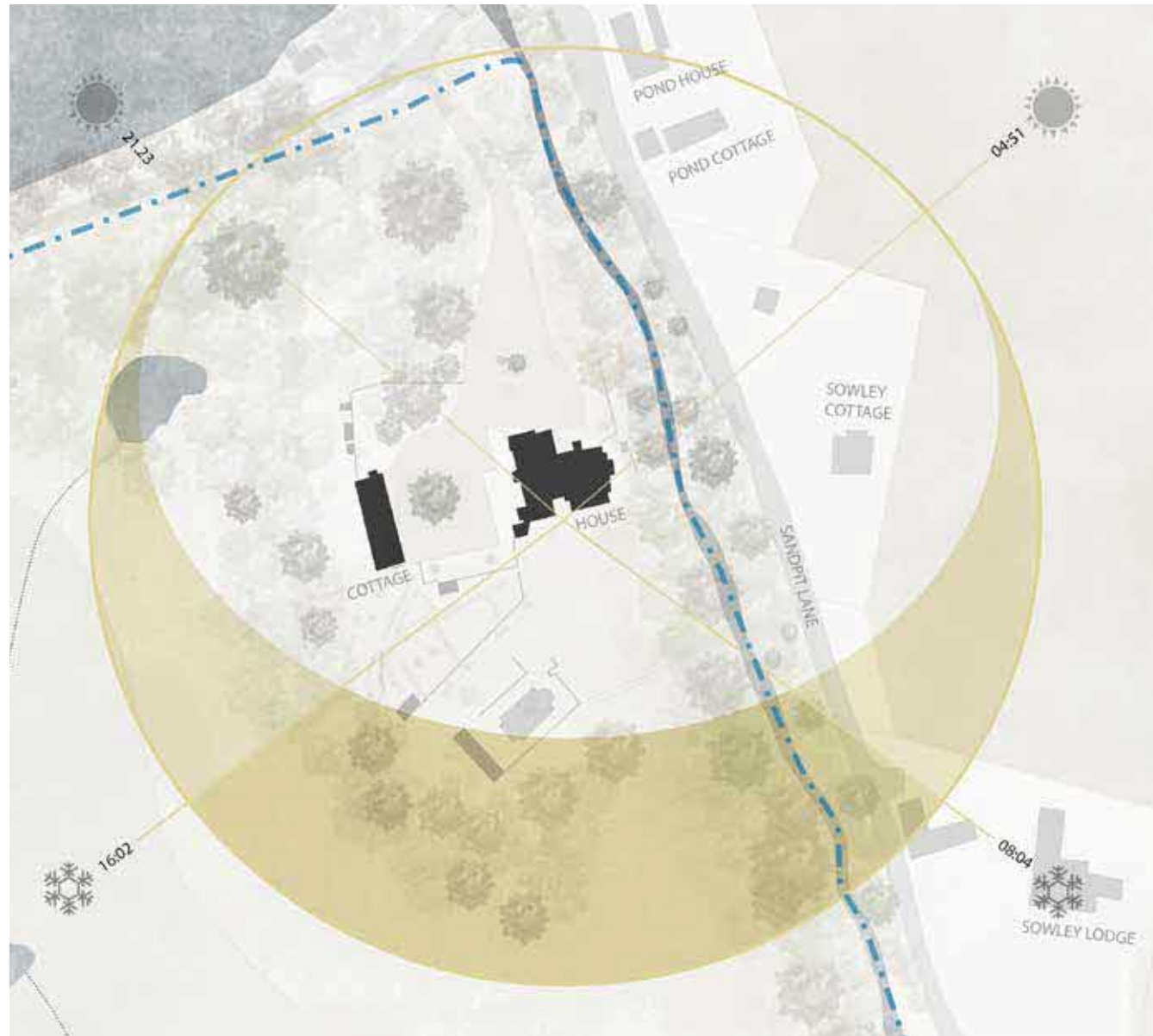
- the roof is superficially in good condition, but there are major structural defects in the roof construction,
- the façade shows signs of delamination,
- portions of façades show signs of repointing, but the east and west elevations require repointing,
- there are points of cracking over the garage doors, and
- there is no clear evidence of lintels over the original rear garage windows.

Internally, it was noted that the floor on both ground and first levels are uneven. Most of the ground floor is solid concrete, with the southern living room the only suspended timber floor.

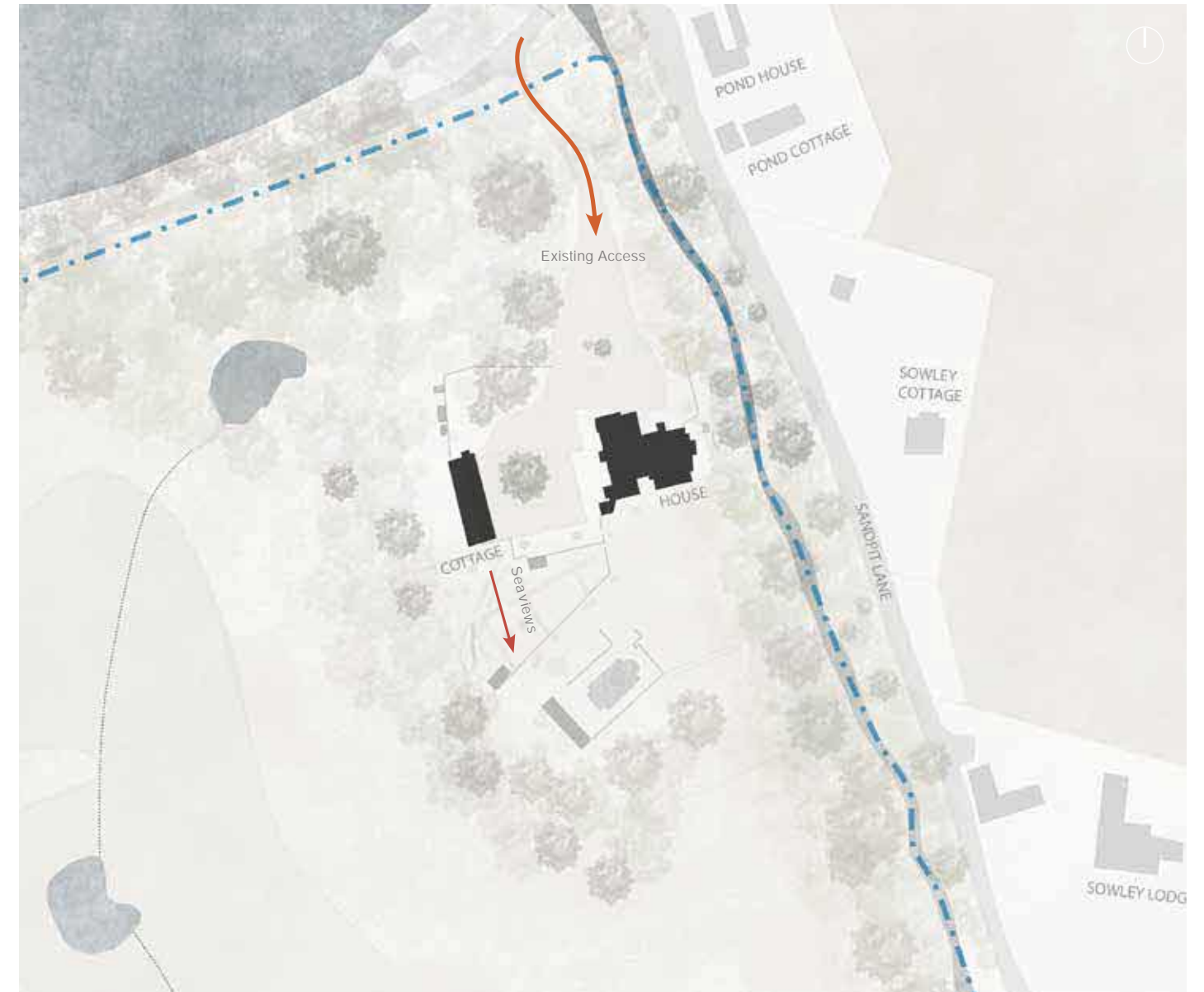


Condition

Daylight and Principal Views



Daylight Hours and Exposure



Existing Access and Views

Brief Design Concept

The Cottage is to be inhabited by an elderly occupant, and alterations and upgrades are necessary to offer suitable comfort and support. An improved layout will create better spaces for spending time with family, sharing a love of cooking & eating together, and of gardening & flowers.

Alterations aim to reflect the building and its history, therefore much of the proposals include remedial works to reinstate or revive traditional aspects of the building. The approach will be light touch and restorative, focusing on small changes and using the existing palette of materials and construction methods in order to improve the existing condition and better the building's performance, reducing its energy demand and draw on the grid and ensuring longevity of the work - see General Works for more detail.

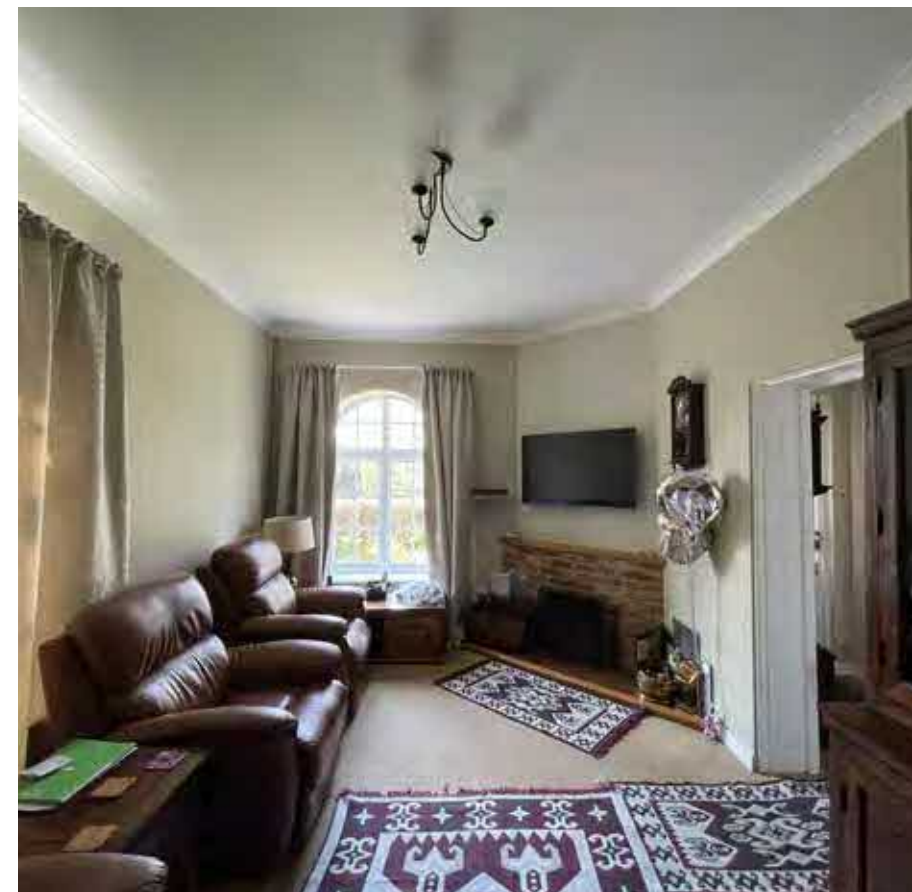
Where damaged, components or materials will be replaced with reclaimed items or matched with sufficiently suitable alternatives. Any demolition will be limited to essential work and will be completed with care.

Internally, this will include traditional timber details such as timber panel doors and skirtings. New windows will be timber casements with some fixed panels, with astragals and mullions in a style and pattern which matches existing fenestration, but double glazing instead of single.

Orientation currently ignores views and light to the South, and so proposals include opening up two former window arches and creating a central garden door, plus lowering the sills of two eastern windows. The current stair position restricts the best southern rooms on both floors and so it will be relocated to centre of the plan by the relocated entrance door.

The following section details the works proposed as part of this application.

Images show the existing living room, kitchen and dining area.



Proposals

External Works

External Works

East: Much of the original main east façade remains intact, and the proposal will retain the 2 northern garage double doors. The existing cottage entrance will be removed and blocked up using bricks reclaimed from demolitions elsewhere, and a new entrance with side glazing will be created in one of the arches. Sills to other existing windows will be lowered to bring more natural light into the building and open up views out.

South: Along the short south elevation, two recessed arches seem to be former windows, and these will be re-opened to create windows to match the two existing. An existing central window will be replaced with a new glazed door to create a new connection to the South garden and orchard. At first floor, a small modern flat-roofed dormer will be rebuilt in a hipped style to match the main central dormer and reduce visual impact on the roofscape. It will be made slightly wider to increase usable floorspace and open up views of the garden within the bedroom and to bring in more light.

North: A new dormer is proposed at first floor level to increase usable floorspace, open up views and to bring in more light within the north bedroom in a style to match existing dormers on the east and west.



Proposals

External Works

External Works

West: Under the central dormer of the west elevation, a new central glazed door with side panels will replace a later off-centre triple window to allow access to the main West garden, whilst the under-chimney arched entrance will be bricked up to create internal wall space. Either side of the new central entrance, two new arched windows are proposed in the style of existing windows, allowing natural light into the utility room and study and better balancing the composition of the fenestration. A new roof light is proposed to bring in more light to the north bedroom. This elevation was much altered in 1985, particularly the gable.

Roof: As the underlying roof structure is in poor condition due both to age and poorly executed alterations, the whole timber structure will be taken down to the wall head and a new timber truss installed matching the existing form. The new roof will raise the ridge height by c.200mm and gutter level by c.100mm –this is necessary as inadequate 100mm rafters will be replaced with stronger 150mm rafters, and an improved build up will include a ventilated layer of breathable insulated sarking boards below reinstated clay tiles to reduce heat loss and loss of internal head space. Eaves boards will be added to match the nearby House. Brick cheeks of the main East dormer will be rebuilt in timber with hung clay tiles to match the main West dormer to reduce structural stresses and make insulation easier. Existing crevice bat roost access will be maintained.



Proposals

Internal Works

Internal Works

Ground Floor

Two northern-most garages are to be retained as storage for cars and other garden equipment.

The revised internal layout consolidates the small passageways and poorly connected rooms of the existing cottage and offers a serviced spine in the centre of the plan around which the ground floor is accessed.

The reconfigured dwelling will enclose a single garage unit and workshop. The main Entrance and stairwell will move here from the south of the building, opening up the southern rooms and putting the stair nearer the centre of the plan. The new entrance hall incorporates a toilet under the stairs and connects to a second space with in-built storage and window bench.

An existing long, thin southern sitting room will be opened up by the removal of the stair core to create a larger living and dining area with wide openings connecting to the kitchen and study, which can be easily closed off with sliding doors for privacy. These main living spaces will benefit from improved views out across the Solent and more light from both lowered sills in the main eastern arches, and two reinstated windows and a glazed door to the southern garden, itself creating better access to the designed gardens directly outside.

North of the study area, a garden cloak room with built-in storage includes an additional west garden entrance, and can become a future accessible bedroom. This further connects to a utility storage room, easily converted into a future ensuite wet-room.

First Floor

The relocated stair emerges almost into the centre of the floor, and benefits from two existing dormer windows - open to the ground floor to the East and with in-built storage to the West, creating a lighter and airier hall than existing. Proposals consolidate the existing 4 small bedrooms and a single bathroom into 3 spacious double bedrooms and 3 shower rooms, all with a toilet and storage.

Both north and south bedrooms will benefit from new dormers that increase usable floorspace, open up views and to bring in natural light, with a new west rooflight in the north room opening up a second aspect and bringing in sunshine.

The main bedroom suite will relocate to the sunnier south end of the building and include in-built eaves storage cupboards and a shower ensuite.



First floor stair hall, looking south towards main bedroom



Ground floor from living area towards study and kitchen

Proposals

General Works

All new works will be in keeping with existing in terms of Scale, Style, Detail and Materials, and will meet or improve on the Building Regulations standards as appropriate.

The Principal East elevation remains relatively untouched, with modest opening alterations and replacement roof the main external changes. Massing and profile of the roof essentially remains the same, with the addition of one and replacement of another dormer in a traditional style.

Sustainability

The most appropriate ecological and sustainable techniques, materials and details will be chosen helping create a 'healthy place to live', based on existing traditional examples where appropriate. Materials will be sourced as locally and ecologically as possible, with reclaimed materials such as clay tiles and brick given preference, and sustainable timbers specified for windows and doors; PVC and toxic timber treatments will not be used. The use of long lasting and durable materials, along with careful use of technology and thoughtful construction detailing, will also help minimise maintenance and prolong life, particularly in this coastal location.

Fabric works will rectify issues of damp and the lack of insulation in the floors, walls and roof, and include the overhaul of all windows with timber double glazed units to match existing and new or replacement low-profile

metal framed conservation rooflights. This will reduce heat loss and energy use and also help cool the building in summer, improving general comfort. Breathable materials will be prioritised, where possible. New openings will be positioned to make the most of natural solar gain and light, as well as opening up views.

Replacing the roof gives the opportunity to ensure that it and all dormers are robustly detailed and constructed, with improved airtightness, reduced thermal bridging, and increased thermal and acoustic properties.

Externally, replacement permeable paving in the garden will allow rainwater to dissipate into the ground.

Services

A ground source borehole system will be installed and plant located nearby in the grounds providing hot water for underfloor heating. Services for the whole building are to be updated with more efficient items, including dual-flush sanitary facilities and energy efficient electrical fittings.

Foul drainage will continue to run to an existing septic tank, but the tank itself will be upgraded. Rainwater issues to existing ground soakaways away from buildings.

Lighting

No alterations to external lighting are proposed.

Accessibility

Accessibility is fundamental to the brief, and has been informed by the British Standards & Domestic Regulations to develop a fully accessible property that offers alternatives for supported living as it becomes necessary.

This includes accessible entrances, levelled floors and generous door and corridor widths, as well as placement and layout of services and controls. The new roof truss will allow the current uneven first floor to be levelled, and new stair designed to take a future chair lift. Careful design integrates these aspects, ensuring they are considered part of the overall aesthetic and not superficially applied.

Boundaries

The Cottage boundary is indicated by the red line on the supporting location plan. The surrounding land belonging to Sowley House is in the same ownership.

There is no right of way as this is private land.

Existing garage access remains. Ample parking is available to the east on existing hard paving along the elevation and on the large, gravelled area shared with Sowley House. The main entrance is accessed from a level platt, with existing external paving leading to new doors with landings and stepped access on the South and West elevations.

Appendix
Internal Views

01 Site Photos



Narrow entrance directly into living area.



Narrow, steep & tall inaccessible staircase.



General maintenance and repair.



Kitchen: inadequate storage & tired.



Poorly planned bedrooms & circulation.



Impractical facilities, exposed pipes.



Limited light, floorspace & head height.



Uneven first floor levels.



Displacement & daylight in roof space.



Thin dormer construction.



Unsupported cut purlins, ties above floor.



Services crammed into living spaces.

Appendix
External Views

01 Site Photos



Main East elevation on arrival



South-East corner



South elevation



West elevation



West: leaking downpipes



West: poor detailing



Shifted rafter ends & loosened brickwork



South elevation from Sowley gardens: Cottage on left, House on right.



Sowley House: eaves boards.

Appendix

02 Structural Engineer's Report

INTRUSIVE STRUCTURAL INSPECTION OF
SOWLEY HOUSE
COTTAGE
SOWLEY, LYMINGTON

PROJECT No. 21243

08th August 2022

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INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions were received from the current owners of the above property, to report on the structural condition of the cottage, in advance of a planned refurbishment. This report refers only to the basic structural elements of the cottage. It should not be construed as a general building survey. We have not inspected any parts of the structures which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore, unable to report that any such part is free from defect.

INSPECTION

An initial inspection was made of both the main house and the cottage on 23rd March 2022. The report on that investigation is appended to this report. Only a cursory inspection of the cottage was possible at that time, as the cottage was occupied. A further inspection was made on 13 July 2022, after the tenants had moved out of the cottage. This later inspection aimed to reveal elements of the structure that were hidden behind finishes, as far as possible. However, intrusive investigations were restricted to external trial holes and the ground floor only, for fear of disturbing bats in the roof structure.

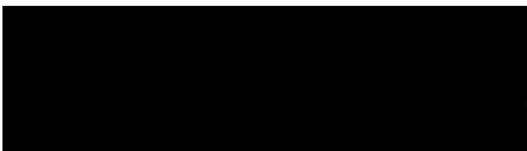
These subsequent investigations have confirmed that the cottage has adequate foundations, but that there are major structural defects in the roof construction.

The line of the roof was very uneven and at the only end of the property that was able to be inspected, it was clear that there was no adequate support to the purlins. In addition, generally the rafters appeared to lack adequate tying at eaves level and at one location it could be seen that the wall plate had rotated and displaced and no longer provided adequate support to the roof.

A cupboard in the cheek of the dormer on the front of the building allowed the inspection of the support to the masonry forming the dormer. The timber support to the brickwork had distorted away from the brickwork leaving the dormer cheek hanging above the support beam (see photo). These significant defects were visible from the very limited areas that were available for inspection. It is considered likely that similar defects exist elsewhere, but are currently not visible. It is therefore recommended that first floor ceilings be removed to allow an inspection to be made and emergency strengthening carried out. This intrusive inspection should be made at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the winter, when significant snow falls could leave the roof at risk of collapse.



Photo showing lack of support to dormer cheek



Eur Ing M A Wharf BSC (Eng) CEng MICE MStructE.

For R J Watkinson Associates Limited

08.08.2022

Appendix

03 Bibliography & Resources

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Images

Where not cited, images are created by the author.

Resources

Maps: National Library of Scotland

Beaulieu History Society

Hampshire Record Office - 51M76/P/2A/11

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