

HERITAGE/DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Apple Trees, Bradfield St.George

Please note, this statement is written in support of the application for retrospective Listed Building consent for works already carried out to the below property.

Prior to the submission of this application, extensive discussions and feedback have been provided by Mr Paul Harrison of the Councils Heritage Department, and where significant to the importance of this application has been referenced in this report as (PH).

GEDDING GEDDING ROAD, BRADFIELD TL 95 NW ST. GEORGE 2/67 Apple Trees - - II House, probably C17. One storey and attics. 2-cell lobby-entrance plan. Timber-framed and plastered. Thatched roof with one eyebrow casement dormer; an axial chimney, the shaft rebuilt in C19 pink/buff brick. C19/C20 small- pane casements. C20 plain tiled gabled porch at lobby-entrance position with boarded door. Interior not examined.

Listing NGR: TL9377558054



Fig.1 - Front Elevation of Apple Trees in its former condition prior to the commencement of the works.

Apple Trees is a dwelling set within the village of Gedding, Suffolk. The building is Grade 2 II Listed although it does not lie in a conservation area. There is a dwelling to the West of the property (Wayside Cottage) although this property is not listed. There are no further dwellings to the North, East or South of the property with only open agricultural fields to these aspects. A further dwelling lies to the South-West of Apple Trees (Woodside) however this is quite distant from Apple Trees and is heavily obscured from its view because of the established trees in the area.

Overview of the works carried out to date

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting drawings and photographs including;

- A) Existing Drawings - the set of survey drawings providing plans and elevations of the building 'as existing' post commencement of the works (also inclusive of Location Plan and Existing Site Plan)
- B) Photo Record of the Building Prior to the Works - photographs of the building taken at the point of producing the 'Existing Drawings' set above.
- C) Photo Record of the Building Following the Removal of the External Render – photographs of the building taken at the point of the external render being removed showing the condition of the original timbers before their removal/replacement.
- D) Diagrammatic Photo Survey Reference Drawing - a visual diagrammatic drawing providing an overview/key of the parts of the building that have been worked on and the locations of photos that have been included in the report identified in E) below.
- E) Photographic Survey of the Works Carried Out to Date - photographs of the building showing the extent of the works carried out to date (with number references to their locations on the 'Diagrammatic Photo Survey Reference Drawing')

Works carried out to the building to date and the discoveries made upon doing so are as follows;

- Removal of single storey lean-to wing.
(Refer to drawing number 079-20/S/02 and supporting Photographic Survey document for location)
The single storey lean-to wing (non-original) has been removed in preparation of the new single storey lean-to extension. The footings for the new extension have already been installed. This is all as per the Planning Approval (DC/20/04267) and Listed Building Approval (DC/20/04268).
- Removal of Entrance Porch/Lobby.
(Refer to drawing number 079-20/S/02 and supporting Photographic Survey document for location)
The single storey porch/lobby (non-original) has been removed in preparation of the new external porch. This is all as per the Planning Approval (DC/20/04267) and Listed Building Approval (DC/20/04268).
- Render and internal finishes removal.
(Refer to drawing number 079-20/S/02 and supporting Photographic Survey document for location)
The external concrete render has been removed in its entirety. This was not strictly in accordance with the details submitted and approved in the Listed Building Approval (DC/20/04268) by Loftus Architects Ltd which stated that the extent of any render repairs/replacement were to be agreed with the LPA and architect before commencement of the works, albeit it could be argued that due to the extent of defective render that this might have well been the outcome nonetheless.



Loftus Architects

Upon the removal of the render, it was discovered that the render was applied on expanded metal lathing over bitumen felt. Furthermore, on removal of internal finishes it was found that these also had been impermeable. This treatment is always associated with severe decay of underlying timbers even when they are of good, aged oak. In this instance the timber of the original construction seems to have been of variable quality – re-used and new pieces of slight dimensions – resulting inevitably and predictably in catastrophic decay of the wall frame (PH).

- Replacement of existing decayed timber frame at Ground Floor.
(Refer to drawing number 079-20/S/02 and supporting Photographic Survey document for location)

In light of the full uncovering of the existing timber frame it was evident that the frame was essentially of primary bracing, almost universal from the late 1600s into the 1800s. Numerous members of the frame were re-used, with redundant joints and features. Studs did not correspond to the mortices in the plate / beam above. Some studs simply looked more modern, and even studs with band-saw marks were badly decayed – these were unlikely to be older than the mid-1800s (PH).

In summary, the framing of the walls (as shown in the photographs taken prior to their removal) appeared to be at best a relatively late rebuild with a mixture of re-used and new timber. The wall framing is unlikely to date much before about 1800 and could be somewhat later (PH).

Due to the establishment of the extensive decay of the existing timber studs (as can be seen in the appended 'Photo Record of the Building Prior to the Works'), it was deemed by the building contractor that full replacement was required, with new SW timbers installed in place of the original timbers. It should be noted that this was carried out independently by the building contractor without prior consultation or knowledge of either client/local authority Planning/Heritage Departments/architect/structural engineer, and as such details were not agreed beforehand unbeknown to the applicant/owner of the property. Upon review of the situation with Mr Paul Harrison (Heritage Officer) it was deemed (albeit informally) that due to the extent of previous alteration and the resulting heritage value of a substantial proportion of the timber structure, Mr Harrison expected to be able to support an application to retain works to the timber frame as executed (PH).

Although it is acknowledged that the extensive replacement of the existing timbers with new SW timbers has not been carried out in accordance with the correct procedures, it is nonetheless evident that their replacements were necessary in light of the extent of damage caused to them over time making the building increasingly unsafe due to structural instability. It should be noted that this was caused primarily due to incorrect construction techniques being carried out historically on the building prior to the applicant's ownership. Furthermore, the introduction of the replacement SW timber frame has provided an opportunity to retain as much of the original historic structure as possible which would otherwise no doubt have been lost altogether over time if the building had been left to continue to decay due to the harmful construction techniques that were established.

- **Brick chosen for new plinth along the north wall.**

(Refer to drawing number 079-20/S/02 and supporting Photographic Survey document for location)

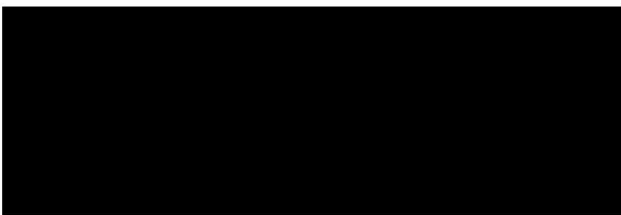
Reservations have however been expressed by Mr Harrison regarding the brick chosen in the rebuilding of the plinth walls. It was expressed that the brick chosen should have at least matched the bricks in the new extensions (PH). However, it is felt that this might perhaps have been a misunderstanding as to the intension of the finished look of the brick plinth, as a black painted finish will be applied to the bricks rather than have the facing brick exposed as per the current situation. This would be as per the approved planning/listed building application drawings, and in replication of the original brick plinth finish.

- **External Render.**

Advice was also provided by the Heritage Officer regarding the re-application of the external lime render to the building. The originally approved Listed Building consent states that all new lime render will be applied on timber laths. However, it was felt by Mr Paul Harrison (Heritage Officer) that given the circumstances it does not seem appropriate to insist on the use of timber laths, and instead lime render applied directly to wood fibre board would be supported (PH). As such, it can be confirmed that it is the intention of the applicant to make this substitution of specification with a wood fibre board to be used in place of timber laths as the substrate for the external lime render.

I trust that the above clarifies the situation and demonstrates justification for retrospective approval for the works carried out on the property to date.

Yours Sincerely,



Simon Loftus

(BA.Hons, BArch Hons, PG Dip. Hons. RIBA)

Director/Architect