

HERITAGE ASSET STATEMENT

ELM COTTAGE, GRAVESEND, ALBURY SG11 2LW

Proposed alteration: replacement of one ground floor front elevation window & making good.

Introduction

The purpose of this **Heritage Justification Statement & Impact Assessment**, together with a **Historic Building Appraisal**, is to inform & support the application for listed building consent. The statement will provide the **description of significance** of Elm Cottage (Grade II listed building), its setting & the wider context, together with an appraisal of the settings of the nearby listed buildings, in this part of the Patmore Heath (Albury) Conservation Area.

An assessment of the **impact of the proposals** on the special interest, character, appearance & significance of these heritage assets will be considered & evaluated- *to fully justify the proposed works & to explain how the proposals would not harm the character, appearance, special interest or significance as a listed building.*

The statement has special regard to sections 66(1) & 72(1) of the Planning (Listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990, as the site includes a listed building & is within the designated conservation area, & is to satisfy the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (July 2018) 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, paragraphs 189, 193- 202; Statements of Heritage Significance- Analysing significance in heritage assets- Historic England Advice Note 12 (October 2019); & East Herts District Council local planning policy.

This Heritage Justification Statement concentrates specifically on the heritage assets involved & the historic environment & is to be read alongside the Design & Access Statement, which gives the general background to the site, surroundings & detail of the proposed alterations with the design drawings.

Background

Elm Cottage is a Grade II listed building, located on the west side of Gravesend- the road that links Clapgate, Albury & Little Hadham (to the south) with Furneux Pelham & Stocking Pelham (to the north), within the defined Patmore Heath Conservation Area. Patmore Heath- SSSI & Nature Reserve- is to the east of Gravesend. The Catherine Wheel ph is to the south of the application site, on the road leading to the heathland.

Elm Cottage is, in appearance, a 1-&-a-half storey detached house, surrounded by gardens, now with modern dormer windows to the former attic space of the earlier original cottage, with a steeply pitched thatch roof. The early red brick stack is now 2/3 along the ridge towards the north end (originally an end stack, prior to north extension); the broad modern red brick stack is at the south gable end of the cottage, as a part of the south end extensions. The thatched roof is hipped at the north end & has a modern ornamental patterned ridge. The eaves are deep & provide a wide overhang above the walls; there is a thatched rear outshut for a part of the width of the original cottage. The lower part of the new north gable is of dark stained weatherboarding, each side of the broad projecting external base to the stack.

There is a recent large garden room extension to the rear elevation.

No historic windows survive the 20th century modern refurbishments & extensions. The front door to the porch & the recessed door, aligned to the front wall, are simple 19th/ early 20th century vertical boarded ledged & braced (outer) & ledged (inner), though now with modern inset diamond leaded lights.

The building was first listed on 11 September 1980. The description is given below.

TL 42 NW ALBURY GRAVESEND (west side) 8/54 Elm Cottage Grade II

C17-C18 cottage, timber-framed, refaced in plaster on the front elevation and rear, weatherboarded on side elevation, one storey and attics. Four modern casements, doorcase with thatched penticed weather porch, one gabled dormer, central brick chimney stack, hipped thatched roof sloping to outshut at rear.

Listing NGR: TL4390525857

The proposed works affecting heritage assets

Replacement window: The majority of the existing cottage windows are currently single glazed modern standard pattern types, some with top-hung vents, all with a plain rectangular section glazing bars. The proposal is to replace one ground floor front elevation window with a traditional timber window, with glazing bars, utilizing single glazing. The existing window already has 9 panes so the new 9 pane window will visually replicate the existing window, with no change to the existing window reveal. The size of the window panes are very close in size to the panes in the other windows of the house.

Further details of the new window are provided in the enclosed manufacturer's specification & elevation drawings.

Considering potential impacts to significance of heritage assets

The key **significance of Elm Cottage is the surviving historic timber frame**, retained & preserved in the central, core part of the listed building, together with the old chimney stack. The 20th century alterations, repairs, modernising refurbishments & extensions have not been kind to the special historic interest, character, appearance & significance of the original cottage. The surviving old historic oak, chestnut & pine frame has been subjected to harsh sand blasting, leaving the exposed frame, in some areas, with a frassy, worm-eaten, desiccated surface appearance. Inspection of the frame suggests that the structure dates from the early-mid 18th century (rather than 17th century posited in the formal list description).

The original long straw thatch, with a plain simple flush ridge has been replaced with modern variants, to allow for lower pitches at dormer mono-pitch roofs, & patterned block cut, patterned ridge. The earlier limewashed lime/ hair plaster on wood lath finish to the walls has been generally replaced with modern cement-based render.

No early fenestration or doors or stairs/ ladder survive, although original slim bricks of the **early original chimney stack** have been incorporated in the sensitively part rebuilt surround.

The proposed alteration to the window would therefore entail **no impact or harm to any historic structure or fabric**. Furthermore, the work is restricted to the existing window frame opening which is sited in the modern extension at the southern end of the cottage. **This window is being replaced in the context of a further 11 windows being replaced at the same time, with the same specification, by the same window company, and which have already been approved by East Herts Council.**

All making good will accord with usual conservation good practice & follow the advice of SPAB Technical Notes & guidance.

Due to lack of any proximity to other historic buildings & distance from the accessible public road or footpaths, there is **no impact to the character & appearance of the conservation area**.

It is worth noting that there is no close view possible from the public realm of Elm Cottage, with the cottage set well back into the site gardens from the screened road (with no pedestrian footway access).

Conclusion & comment

The proposed alteration to the windows, with this new window being one of 12 new windows, will considerably enhance the appearance of the cottage by removing ungainly top-hung vents & much improving the proportions & rhythm of the fenestration throughout.

The proposed works are considered to be positive, enhancing alterations to the appearance of the much-altered cottage, that have substantial public benefits in both retaining the viability of the dwelling house as a listed building, with no harmful impact.

8th February 2023