

29 Lower High Street, Burford, Oxfordshire, OX18 4RN

Heritage/Design Statement



**Enlarged opening and replacement external metal door to rear elevation.
(Retrospective).**

Revision A

May 2024

1.0 Introduction

29 Lower High Street is a terraced building located on the east side of the Lower High Street in Burford. It is Grade II listed and is within the Burford Conservation Area. It is two and a half storeys tall, built out of Oolitic limestone with a stone slate roof.

2.0 Proposal

This application is for the replacement of a failed single glazed, modern 'Critell' type opening with the construction of a larger opening and the installation of a double glazed, black finished metal external door. This is a retrospective Application.



Figure 1 Completed work showing door to exterior.

3.0 Planning Background

3.1 Planning History

The Owner purchased the building in 2019. It had been a shop premises historically, and Planning and Listed Building Consent (ref 19/02817/LBC and 19/02816/FUL) was granted for the conversion of first and second floors to living accommodation, alterations to ground floor including removing part of rear elevation to create courtyard.

A subsequent Application for alterations to include replacement of existing rear velux windows with dormer windows, relocation of staircase to former position, ground floor door opening and insertion of two new wood burning stoves into existing fireplaces (reference 20/00920/LBC) was approved in 2020 and the works carried out.

3.2 Designation

As a Grade II listed building, this is a building “of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve.” The record confirms the following for 29 Lower High Street;

BURFORD AND UPTON HIGH STREET AND SIGNET (East Side) SP2512 (Enlargement) No 29 (Bygones) 7/58 (Previously listed as 12.9.55 premises on NW corner of Church Lane) II

Cottage. C17, altered mid-c19. Rubble with Cotswold stone roof, brick chimney. 2 storeys, previously lower and with gabled front from vestiges on front. 2 windows on 1st floor, 1 on ground floor, glazing bar sashes with timber lintels, blocked door to left. Perhaps once two cottages.

3.3 Pre-Application Advice

Following a misunderstanding, Bryan Martin and Emily Rogers from West Oxfordshire District Council visited site early April 2023 to view the doorway. It was confirmed that listed building consent should be obtained and this would likely be supportable.

3.4 Ecology

The doorway does not affect any other fabric and previous ecology reports had confirmed no bats present on site.

4.0 The heritage asset and its significance

4.1 History and architectural development

Burford was mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 as an agricultural village. It was granted a charter establishing a merchant guild between 1088 and 1107 allowing burghers to run and hold their own independent markets. The burgage plots developed, with their characteristic narrow proportions. Burford boomed in the Elizabethan era with the surrounding land bringing in substantial wool revenues. By the eighteenth century it was a flourishing market and coaching centre. However, the advent of the industrial revolution and Burford not having a railway station meant that Burford's fortunes fell. However, due to its unspoilt nature, by the early twentieth century Burford and the wider area became a centre for Tourism with people visiting the Cotswolds as a destination.

29 Lower High Street appears to mirror the history of Burford in its evolution. Constructed out of coursed random oolitic limestone, with a stone slate roof laid in diminishing courses, most probably as two cottages, it is likely that the external fabric is seventeenth century. The evidence of the circular staircase to the left handside, and the second floor partition wall are all of that era. The main facade is rubble but towards the middle of the first floor windows, the stone changes to be a higher course height. It is possible that the house was once lower, and gabled. This would certainly be typical for the area, and would make for a more comfortable relationship with the adjacent building. This was altered to a conventional two storey height with gutter left to right and this alteration is probably early eighteenth century, with the roof structure is contemporary to that date. The building was historically knocked into a single dwelling, and it is thought that at that time the six over six sash window under a simple timber lintel was installed. The beam supporting the floor in the middle of the building, spanning front to back, is probably eighteenth century. There is also an attractive two panel door to the second floor.

It can generally be assumed that in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century this cottage would have become in poor condition as the fortune of Burford declined. As Burford became a destination, it is clear that this building would have been renovated to become a shop, a usage which continued until recently. The first floor has been renovated to form a self contained shop.

4.2 Analysis of significance

It is acknowledged that not all parts of an asset may make an equal contribution to significance. Understanding the specific elements of significance, and the varying contribution of aspects of the site are crucial if the effects of proposals are to be understood. Below the various significance factors will be briefly discussed;

Archaeological interest

There is strong above ground archeological interest. The external walls of the building reveal its phasing, and historic layout. This shows the past lives of the building, including being two dwellings, the historic elevation with the gable and the evolution and 'upgrades' of the twentieth century to include the new metal framed window and front door. This significance allows an understanding of the previous phasing, and remains worthy of further investigation. This is not affected by our proposal.

Architectural and artistic interest

Architecturally, the building is basic, if charming. The front elevation is multiphase, and expresses the evolution, but is best described as vernacular. Internally, evidence of an earlier layout is evident, but nothing of exceptional architectural interest is present. However, the building forms part of the wider Conservation Area, which is very well known and worthy of preservation.

Historic Interest

As evidenced earlier, this building is at its strongest in terms of historic interest. Its evolution and phasing plan follows the rise and fall of Burford as a market town, meeting point and then visitor attraction. It plays a small but important role in the streetscape and wider interest of the area, and this unspoilt aesthetic is why the area is still popular today.

4.3 General significance and impact of the proposal

Generally, the significance of the building is recognised of being of special interest, 'warranting every effort to preserve'. In our opinion, this significance is from the archeological interest, the phasing of the building which although not entirely known is understood to a level to inform this application, and from the historic interest and contribution to the wider streetscape. It is not exceptional architecturally, but is a good example of a Cotswolds building.

5.0 Conclusion

This door replaced an opening of no historic significance. It enlarged the opening but retained the lintel and stone quoins, so no historic fabric was lost. The replacement door, being metal framed and of traditional design, is similar to the front window, and is obviously 'of its time' which respects the evolution. With that in mind, we would encourage the Local Authority to look favourably at this Application.