Heritage Impact Assessment

Alpha Cottage, Gweek

Repairs and Renovations

August 2023

A report by

Enhance Heritage & Planning

Contents

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The information, opinion and advice contained in this document has been prepared and provided in accordance with the RTPI's Code of Professional Conduct.

Introduction

Enhance Heritage and Planning has been commissioned by Ed Crossley to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment to support a Listed Building Consent application at Alpha Cottage, Gweek.

The Listed Building Consent covers internal renovations, intended to bring the building into a habitable state, and to ensure the preservation of the structure for future generations.

The Heritage Impact Assessment will describe the significance of the site in proportionate detail. It also describes the renovation works that are proposed, and consider their impacts on the significance of the building.

Alpha Cottage is a Grade II listed cottage. The building is small, but prominently sited in the village of Gweek at the fork between the roads towards Tolvan Cross and towards Constantine. The building is not within a conservation area.

The building is adjacent to listed buildings and opposite others; these are described in the Appendix as they provide some context. However, due to the nature of this Listed Building Consent (mainly affecting the interior, with no substantial change in external design or appearance) the settings of these buildings will not be affected. Therefore, this report focuses on Alpha Cottage.

While assessing the significance of the site, a site visit was carried out on the 28th of June 2023. In addition, desk-based research into the local Historic Environment Record, Historic England's building list descriptions, and map regression from the first half of the 19th century to the present day, have provided the evidence base for this report.

This HS has been researched and written by Alfie Robinson BA MA AssocIHBC. He is an Associate member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation, and is accredited in conservation practice that evaluates change in the built and historic environment. He holds a BA and MA in art and architectural history and has experience with all types of heritage asset from listed buildings and conservation areas to the Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site.

Legislative and Policy Considerations

The proposed repairs and renovations will affect the fabric of a Grade II listed building, without changing its external design, plan, or footprint. As a result, although the project falls short of the definition of 'development' for planning purposes, it requires Listed Building Consent (LBC). As part of the application for LBC, applicants must describe the significance of the heritage asset affected. This is a requirement of both local and national planning policy.

Gweek Parish does not yet possess a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and therefore the two key planning policy documents (material considerations for a Listed Building Consent) are the National Planning Policy Framework and the Cornwall Local Plan. Legislation for listed buildings, setting out their legal protection and the requirement for Listed Building Consent, is laid out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the government's current planning policy in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraphs of relevance are covered below.

Paragraph 194 refers to proposals affecting heritage assets and states, "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation".

The proposals (again Paragraph 194) must also be evaluated in the context of heritage at stake. Paragraph 199 sets out the high bar set for heritage protection, that "great weight" should be given to the asset's conservation, as well as its setting.

In determining applications, Paragraph 197 requires that: "Local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness".

Paragraphs 199-202 sets out the principles to weigh up changes to the historic environment against other needs. Proposals that could lead to substantial harm or demolition of a heritage asset are only to be considered in "exceptional" circumstances. Minor harm, known as "less than substantial harm" to a heritage asset (or its setting) can be permitted if other benefits justify development.

Cornwall Local Plan

At the county level, the development plan is the Cornwall Local Plan.

Cornwall Local Plan - Strategic Policies (2010-2030)
Policy 24, which relates to the Historic Environment, states: "proposals will be permitted where they would sustain the cultural distinctiveness and significance of Cornwall's historic rural, urban and coastal environment by protecting, conserving and where appropriate enhancing the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings".

In addition, the Policy states: "Proposals will be expected to:

- Sustain designated heritage assets;
- Take opportunities to better reveal their significance;
- Maintain the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas, especially those positive elements in any Conservation Area Appraisal;
- Conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the design, character, appearance and historic significance of historic parks and gardens;
- Conserve and, where appropriate, enhance other historic landscapes and townscapes, including registered battlefields, including the industrial mining heritage;
- Protect the historic maritime environment, including the significant ports, harbours and quays".

The policy notes that proposals for historic buildings "should be informed by proportionate historic environment assessments and evaluations (such as heritage impact assessments, desk-based appraisals, field evaluation and historic building reports) identifying the

significance of all heritage assets that would be affected by the proposals and the nature and degree of any effects and demonstrating how, in order of preference, any harm will be avoided, minimised or mitigated".

The policy adds: "Great weight will be given to the conservation of Cornwall's heritage assets. Where development is proposed that would lead to substantial harm to assets of the highest significance, including un-designated archaeology of national importance, this will only be justified in wholly exceptional circumstances, and substantial harm to all other nationally designated assets will only be justified in exceptional circumstances".

Site Proposals

At present, the building is not habitable. The building currently suffers from significant damp issues caused by inappropriate interventions into the building (discussed below). The building also needs a complete electrical rewire and its plumbing has not been modernised (the blackwater and greywater of the building go into storm drains, not into the mains). The ground floor of the building is in poor condition, the staircase is structurally unsound, and the suspended timber floors over the ground floor are in need of strengthening.

The overall aim of the project is, with minimal intervention, to make the building habitable and presentable. This involves dealing with the worst sources of dampness which can be managed without unintended consequences, and re-finishing the building's interior. It also involves strengthening and replacing compromised timber elements where necessary.

There are no changes proposed to the layout of the building, or its footprint. External works are limited exclusively to window repairs.

Works to the ground floor

—Replace uneven concrete floor laid directly on the ground with a 'limecrete' floor laid on foam glass substrate.

—Stiffen suspended first floor after inspection of floor joists for rot. Add floor joists between existing using joists to reduce centre width, (with matching profiles) and replace floorboards where necessary, retaining those that can be reused.

—Strip ground floor of gypsum plaster. Remove battening and plastic sheeting in kitchen. Replaster with breathable mixture and finish with either limewash or mineral paint.

Works to the first floor

—Strip back first floor of plaster. Repair areas of damaged cob with cob to straighten. Finish with breathable materials.

Works to the staircase

—Replace rotten timber structure, treads and risers, 'like for like'. Replace stick bannister 'like for like'. Retain probable 19th century panelling at ground floor.

Works to Windows and Doors

—No changes to exterior design or surface coatings are proposed.

—Repair timber to existing doors where necessary and repaint.

—Repair window joinery on all existing windows where necessary. Repaint, and re-putty joins between glazing and glazing bars.

Works to Services

—Replumb the building connecting blackwater and greywater to mains.

—Electrical rewire of the building.

Historical Context and Map Regression

This section gives an overview of the development of the site and its context over time. It focuses on mapping evidence to show the development of the plot and the heritage assets nearby, and makes reference to the local Historic Environment Record to understand the area as a whole.

Alpha Cottage is a late 18th century cottage sitting in the core of Gweek. Gweek is a small, rural settlement with medieval origins. Its name is a corruption of Cornish 'gwyk' referring either to a forest or to a village (Historic Environment Record 24640, Gweek, Medieval Settlement). The village remains wooded to this day, and is relatively sheltered compared to the uplands around Constantine due to depressions associated with the creek.

In spite of the medieval origins of the settlement, there is no above-ground -pre-industrial era architecture in Gweek village and the earliest buildings tend to be early 19th century in date. Alpha Cottage is no exception, and this trend is typical of Cornwall which has a notable paucity of secular medieval architecture.

By the 1840s, when Alpha Cottage first appears in the available maps, Gweek remained a small settlement. The cottage looked towards open fields to the west, which were built up in the later part of the century with the dwellings known as Post Office Row. The village's economic significance mainly lies in its access to the Helford Creek, enabling the transport of moorstone, quarried granite, and fish, further afield.

Gweek is also historically connected to Constantine, and was not an independent parish but was within Constantine's parish boundary and was served by its church, which has early origins (see for example HER No. 24637 which points to 11th century documentary references to Constantine).

The settlement pattern of Gweek is essentially a narrow ribbon, following the basin of the river valley with larger, early 19th century houses on the southern edge (for example The Elms and Barnfield, both of which are Grade II listed), and a denser cluster of terraced houses and cottages in the core (including Alpha). The latter group may reflect much earlier street layouts. Gweek saw major additions in the 20th century, particularly as the ground rises up to the east, in the form of low-density bungalow developments. These have a distinct, suburban character, which contrasts to the village's historic core.

1841 Tithe map

The approximate footprint of Alpha Cottage has been marked in red in the overview crop of the map and the exploded view (bottom right).

The tithe map demonstrates that Alpha cottage was in place along with the terrace of cottages it is still part of today (including Tattle Tale Cottage which shares a party wall, see its listed building description in the Appendix).

The row of cottages, including Alpha Cottage, were relatively isolated in the 1840s, facing towards open fields to the west.

The footprint shown in the map implies that the building did not yet have its east-facing wing in the 1840s. However, the plan of a building this small may not have been portrayed accurately on tithe maps.

1877 1878 OS 25-inch map

The 1877-1878 25-inch-to-the-mile OS maps show Alpha Cottage with the plan it assumes today, with the exception of the triangular extension added in the late 20th century.

1905-1907 OS 25-inch map

In the early 20th century, little had changed at Alpha Cottage compared to its state in the second half of the 19th century.

There are no changes to the building's plan registered in the map, although its form is a little more readable.

The context surrounding the Cottage became a little more 'urbanised' by this point, however, with Post Office Row appearing to the west.

Site Descriptions

This section describes the architecture of the site, internally and externally. It also discusses the development of the structure over time, and its present-day condition.

Alpha Cottage: Plan

Alpha Cottage has a simple plan. Its original core is roughly square with a single room on the ground floor and a single room above. To this, a wing was added slightly later in the 19th century, which follows the slope of the ground to the east. A step, both at ground and first floor level of the cottage, indicates the rising topography and implies two distinct phases of building.

Alpha Cottage: Exterior

The Roof of Alpha Cottage has received recent treatment, to a high-standard. The roof was re-covered in 2017 using diminishing scale (scantle) slates and terracotta ridge tiles. In the late 1980s when the building was first listed, the roof was recorded to also be a scantle slate covering with a cement wash, which was a common treatment of historic roofs in the 20th century. The recent work appears to be good condition. The 2017 Listed Building Consent application for the re-roofing works is the only planning record available for the building (PA17/07446).

South Elevation

The south elevation of the building is visible and prominent to pedestrians and vehicles as they approach the village core from the quay.

Figure 1: Contextual view of Alpha Cottage in Gweek. The south elevation is visible here.

The south elevation is near-symmetrical, and the main wing of the cottage has a single casement window almost at centre on the ground floor and a single casement above it. This gable wall (the roof is half-hipped) of the building is entirely built of rubblestone, which contrasts with the lateral walls.

The lintel above the ground floor window is a single granite block, while the upper storey window has a 20th century replacement wooden lintel. Both casements are 20th century in date and have modern, flawless (i.e. modern) glass. They are of no historic interest. The only notable window in the building, as referenced in the listed building description, faces west.

Figure 2: Detail of the south elevation showing wing and 20th century extension

Also visible from the south is the main wall of a wing which juts out to the east of the building. This wing appears in the later 19th century mapping evidence (and may have been extant in some form before this, since the maps are not precise). However, the south wall of this wing may have been rebuilt in the 20th century. Indicators for this are the thickness of its walls, which are built of brick, and the heavy cement render which has been textured in imitation of rubblestone.

At the junction between the main cottage and the wing, there is an ad hoc 20th century extension. This is built on rendered blockwork footings, with large single glazed windows and a lightweight plastic roof.

West elevation

The west elevation of the building is asymmetrical and features the original entrance to the cottage, plus a single 'Yorkshire' (horizontal) sliding sash window directly above it. Both lateral walls of the building, including the western wall, are constructed of rubblestone at ground floor giving way to a short course of cob on the first floor. This is a typical Cornish vernacular construction method, and the same technique can be seen in earlier buildings in the county. Both corners of the building are tied in with granite quoins.

Figure 3: West elevation of Alpha Cottage, showing construction techniques

The doorway is headed with a granite lintel, and there is no reason to think it is not the original entrance to the building. The list description (see Appendix) notes that the bottom half of this four-panelled door is probably original, and this is still the case. The two lower panels have simple bolection mouldings disguising the junction between the panels of the door; the upper two bolections were discarded in the 20th century when glazing was inserted.

The window above this doorway is the only window of note in the building. It probably dates from the first half of the 19th century, but not much earlier since the glazing bars are very narrow (i.e. in a mid 18th century sash one would expect much thicker glazing bars). The sash is in reasonable condition, though the putty around the glazing bars is heavily cracked. The sash has not been painted shut and is still openable.

East elevation

Figure 4: East elevation of Alpha Cottage

The east elevation of Alpha Cottage is unfenestrated. The east wing of the building appears somewhat truncated from this angle, which may be further evidence of rebuilding in the 20th century to accommodate vehicular traffic on the road. Also, the gable wall's masonry paint is peeling which reveals a layer of cementitious plaster (see top right). There is a very narrow axial chimney stack on the gable end of the wing.

The east wall of the original block of the cottage is again cob at upper level. Although this is less obvious from the east façade, this is confirmed by internal evidence.

Condition

Figure 5: Details showing condition of exterior fabric

Throughout the exterior of the building, synthetic masonry paints have been used. The surface coatings appear to be rather thick. In places, they are peeling loose from the wall. The use of this unbreathable material has led to characteristic blistering of the paint, where moisture tries to escape the wet fabric of the building. On the interior of the cottage, this has expressed itself in extensive black mould. The same regime of unbreathable paints have been used on the interior, exacerbating the problem.

Interior: ground floor

Figure 6: Views of the principal ground floor room of the cottage. Above: note battering-out of the wall, plus mould. Also note area of exposed gypsum plaster and battenning out of wall (this has been done throughout the ground floor).

The ground floor main room is heated by a central fireplace made of rubblestone (mostly granite). The fireplace has been crudely pointed in dark grey cement. The granite has not suffered from the moisture retention but the softer stones have, albeit slightly. The fireplace has not been functional for a number of years and the flue is sealed off by a plywood panel. It is unknown what salt formation/damp problems might be present above this. The lintel is also a modern replacement and has been machine sawn.

Immediately adjacent to the fireplace, there is a dog-legged staircase with wooden panelling around the stairwell. The external panelling features rather wide boards which are usually indicative of a 19th century felling date, while the underlying structure of treads and risers appears to be heavily rotten.

Figure 7: Detail view of staircase showing rot of staircase treads and risers, and with probable 19th century panelling section marked in red.

Figure 8: Detail of floor joists, seen from ground floor main room

The first floor above the main room has exposed joists with simple ovolo moulded profiles, which are possibly 19th century in date. However, the joists have clearly been interfered with more recently, and at least once joist has had a replacement section scarfed-on, while others have wood stiffening screwed to either side of the joists. The joists have very wide centres, which is responsible the floor being springy. The wall adjacent to the wing has been interfered with, with a modern plaster (unbreathable) coating. This wall may have been partially rebuilt when the east wing was reconstructed.

The floorboards themselves are relatively wide, and some of them have tongue-and-groove beading cut into them about a meter to the south of the staircase. This implies a change or re-laying in the floor, possibly due to a change in the staircase positions, though this is difficult to interpret. The wider floorboards may be 19th century in date rather than recent replacements (greater width of floorboards is indicative of high quality imported timber which became increasingly scarce by the 20th century).

The floor of the main room is poured concrete.

Figure 9: Details of the south eastern and north western corners of the kitchen wing

The kitchen wing has been more heavily altered still. The walls have been battened-out, with plastic sheeting between the structural walls and the external cladding. There is further evidence of blistering from damp at the base of the wall. The plastic sheeting will have exacerbated this.

The brickwork above the door is extremely poor. The original fireplace beneath the central chimney stack (which can be seen on the exterior gable) is difficult to discern. There is however a cupboard built into the thickness of the wall, which one often finds adjacent to fireplaces. A 20th century opening has been cut where the fireplace is likely to have been, and this has concrete steps leading up to it. This is further evidence that the structural envelope of the east wing has been interfered with extensively.

The floor joists have metal bracing where they enter the wall fabric, which may be associated with the rebuilding. The floorboards are wide however, and reminiscent of the main room.

Figure 10: Detail of ad hoc pipework and brickwork in south wall.

Figure 11: East and south walls of the kitchen wing

The window, door, and kitchen fittings are all 20th century in date.

Interior: first floor

Figure 12: Views of the southeast and north sides of the main room, first floor

The first floor main room is accessed by a single staircase in the corner of the ground floor room. A 20th century stick banister was jointed into the staircase but this has broken.

The entirety of the room is finished with an unbreathable plaster which is inappropriate for the lateral walls, which are cob in the upper floor. An exposed area of cob beneath the plaster can be seen, (figure 10) which demonstrates damage caused by moisture retention. The walls are also finished with a coarse 'cottage effect' and cream coloured synthetic gloss paint. Further evidence of mould caused by moisture retention can be seen on the first floor (figure 10, lower left hand side of image).

The ceiling plasterwork in this room is cracked and bowed throughout.

Figure 13: Detail of chimney breast on the first floor.

The first-floor main room also features a solid chimney breast, but a chunk of this has been removed, possibly in the 20th century to fit an electric heater.

The item of interest in the first floor is the single surviving 'Yorkshire' sash window (horizontally sliding). From the interior, some panes of historic glass can be seen with characteristic distortions. The bottom left pane of the left-hand sash is cracked (figure 12) Some of the lower glazing bars have lost the clarity of their moulding profiles due to crude repairs.

Figure 14: View of 19th century 'Yorkshire' sash window in context.

Figure 15: Detail view of 'Yorkshire' sash

The first-floor room of the kitchen wing features few discernible features of historic date or interest. A 'scar' of the old chimney breast is again indicated though in the placement of a cupboard at the right, and the awkward location of the bath in the north-east corner.

Figure 16: Composite view looking east and west into the kitchen wing

The room is again plastered in gypsum, but the underlying skim boards are more sharply defined implying the ceiling was re-worked more recently than the other room.

One notable element is the doorway between the bathroom and the main room, which is a probably 19th century plank door, with very wide planks and substantial supporting braces. The architrave mouldings appear to be 20th century in date, however, with few layers of paint.

The room has suffered heavily from condensation leading to mould (unsurprising in the bathroom context without adequate ventilation), which can be seen towards the base of the wall.

As elsewhere in the building, the window is a fixed-paned casement dating to the 20th century.

Figure 17: Composite view showing severe mould, blistering paint and plaster, and ad hoc plumbing

Statement of Significance

When assessing significance, Historic England identifies four different types of value: historical, evidential, communal and aesthetic. Of these values, Alpha Cottage possesses three types of significance, historical, evidential and aesthetic.

Aesthetic Value

Alpha Cottage is a Grade II listed building in recognition of its special architectural interest. The building is a good example of Cornish vernacular, illustrating relatively conservative building methods that can be found in earlier structures. The use of cob on the lateral, upper walls of the building is fairly typical of Cornish buildings of this type, being a light-weight material which can easily rest on the rubblestone below. Cob is highly vulnerable when it comes to moisture retention; the preservation of examples like this cottage is important.

In plan, the addition of a small wing on the side of the building is also of moderate interest, showing the evolution of even the smallest of dwellings over time—probably in the course of the 19th century, even if the materials of the wing are no longer authentic.

Finally, a modicum of surviving 19th century features and fixtures adds to the significance of the building, namely the lower half of its main door, some panelling around the ground-floor staircase, floor joists and boards above the main room, the 'Yorkshire' sliding window, and a plank door in the first floor of the wing.

There is potential for enhancement in the building, to better reveal its significance and better protect its fabric. It is currently suffering physical and aesthetic harm due to extensive use of inappropriate surface coatings inside and out. The replacement of these would improve the experience of the building, inside and out, as a piece of the historic environment.

Evidential Value

Alpha Cottage's evidential value, its ability to tell us about the past, lies in its simple but evolved plan, the building techniques it demonstrates, and some of the fixtures that are typical of the 19th century. These features are more or less the same as those that provide for its aesthetic and architectural interest, such as the thick rubblestone wall construction, or the horizontal sash. However, the building's small scale is also informative for social history, showing the modest means of working people who built it in the first place.

The evidential value is not outstandingly high given the fairly extensive and disfiguring 20th century alterations to the building, which limit the amount that one can learn from the structure.

Historical Value

More broadly, the building has historical value insofar as it is a surviving and prominent part of Gweek, telling us about the development of the settlement in the course of the 19th century. The cottage is an eloquent example of rural life, and its compact scale shows that historical rural settlements could be densely packed.

Communal Value

The potential for communal value at Alpha Cottage is limited because the house is private, and there is no evidence of continuous occupation or a public social function to the building. As a result, it is unlikely to carry specific meaning for the residents of Gweek and surrounding settlements, apart from the way the cottage contributes to the streetscape of the village.

Summary of Heritage Value and Significance

Category	Heritage Value	Level
Aesthetic	The exterior of the building has aesthetic value as a good, readable example of Cornish vernacular architecture.	Moderate
Historical	There is a moderate degree of historical value stemming from the plan, evolution, and materials with which the building is constructed.	Moderate
Evidential	Evidential value is low in the building due to the paucity of surviving original or historic materials.	Low
Communal	The building is a private residence with no obvious communal function and does not have a history of continuous occupation. Its potential for communal value is very low.	Low-negligible

Heritage Impact Assessment

Impact on Exterior Fabric

As there are no proposed changes to the exterior design or surface coatings, there would be no impacts to the significance of the exterior fabric.

Impact on Plan

The plan of the building would remain entirely unchanged, with the staircase remaining in situ, albeit with compromised parts replaced like-for-like.

Impact on Interior

The re-flooring of the building's ground floor has a potential to reduce damp retention in the lower part of the wall touching the replacement limecrete floor. The concrete floor currently in place has no heritage significance and has a negative effect in terms of moisture retention, so its replacement would be an enhancement. The creation of a flat floor with a slightly insulating effects from the glass foam layer would improve the thermal performance and accessibility of the building, which indirectly assist the preservation of the building by allowing it to be more comfortably occupied.

The stiffening of the building's first floor, main room floor joists would have a positive impact in terms of the comfort of occupiers, safety of the floor, and therefore longevity of the building (again due to its continuing use, occupation, and maintenance). Minor negative impact may stem from the insertion of the joists into the wall which would involve loss of some rubblestone to create socket holes (joist hangers would not be aesthetically acceptable).
This intervention is justified by benefits for the comfort and safety of the floor, and the fact that the floor joists have lost authenticity (evidence is shown above that the joists have been structurally interfered with in two different ways). Other methods to stiffen the floor are unlikely to be effective since the width of the existing joist centres are so large. Similarly, the earlier attempts to stiffen the existing joists in the building have clearly not been successful. Loss of floorboards which cannot be retained is a minor adverse impact but justified by the necessity of replacement for the use of the building.

The stripping of plaster and inappropriate surface coatings throughout the interior would be beneficial. There would be aesthetic enhancement, because synthetic surface coatings have a different appearance to breathable or traditional coatings and the latter are more appropriate to the interior of this heritage asset. There would also be enhancement to the longevity of the structure, since breathable plasters and paints would protect the integrity of rubblestone and particularly cob from harmful moisture retention, decay, and mould.

The like-for-like replacement of the treads, risers, and under structure of the staircase is considered justified in the light of their dangerous condition which again necessitates

intervention. The stick banister again needs replacing and is of 20th century date and no historic significance, so its replacement is considered of no heritage impact. The ca. 19th century or earlier timber panelling which is of historic significance would be retained, preserving of highest-importance feature of the staircase.

Impact on Windows and Doors

The windows and doors of the building would not be replaced, preserving two elements of this listed building that are of historical note, the 'Yorkshire' sliding sash and most of the front door's joinery. The joinery and paint of these elements of the building would be refurbished, extending their life and protecting against further rot. Aesthetically, the repainting, repair, and re-puttying of glazing would greatly improve the appearance of these parts of the building.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed works will bring the building into a habitable state, while making a number of beneficial interventions for the continued survival of the building's fabric. Namely, the replacement of unbreathable plasters internally, the repair and refurbishment of existing windows and doors, and the replacement flooring, will be both aesthetic and conservation enhancements. The historic significance of this small vernacular building will be more readily appreciated following these works.

It has not been possible to avoid the loss of material in all cases. The staircase treads, risers and under-structure are beyond repair, and the first floor needs stiffening which entails additional joist sockets. However, the building cannot be inhabited without intervention in these areas, and therefore these works are considered justified.

In sum, the proposed works would preserve, and in many cases enhance, the significance of the Grade II listed heritage asset.

Appendix: Listed Building Descriptions

National Heritage List for England (Historic England's List) entries are given here in order of proximity to the site, starting with Alpha Cottage itself.

List Entry Number: 1310190 ALPHA COTTAGE, GWEEK (Grade II)

Cottage at end of row. Circa late C18. Rubble and cob walls. Steep grouted scantle slate roof with half-hipped end on right and brick chimney (shared with Tattle-Tale Cottage) over party wall on left. Dry Delabole slate roof over rear wing. Plan: L-shaped plan with probably kitchen/living room at the front with entrance and stair on the left and small kitchen wing at right angles behind the left-hand side. Exterior: 2 storeys. One window west front with doorway to ground floor and window over. C19 or original 4-panel door with top panels later glazed and original 12-pane horizontal-sliding sash. Interior: not inspected.

List Entry Number: 1142123 GUIDE POST NEAR THE SOUTH END OF ALPHA COTTAGE (Grade II)

Guide post. Circa early C20. Cast iron. Round-on-plan shaft. Embossed letters to shaft and to the 3 adjustable pointers. The pointers have rounded corners and are held by bolted collars to the upper-part of the shaft over a moulded cornice. The 3 collars are surmounted by a moulded ball and spear-headed finial. Shaft inscription : CORNWALL (vertically inscribed) West pointer : REDRUTH 10 TRURO 16 South pointer : HELSTON 3 3/4 LIZARD 11 ST KEVERNE 10¼ East pointer : CONSTANTINE 2½ PENRYN 8½ FALMOUTH 9½

List Entry Number: 1142122 TATTLE TALE COTTAGE, GWEEK (Grade II)

House in row. C18. Painted rubble and cob walls. Grouted scantle slate roof with gable ends adjoining party walls. Rubble stack over left-hand end, brick stack (shared with Alpha Cottage q.v.) over right-hand end. Plan: 2 original rooms at the front, wider kitchen/living room on left, parlour on right, flanking a cross passage leading to stair behind right-hand room and outshut with service rooms behind middle and left of the house. Exterior: 2 storeys. Eaves heightened circa late C19. Nearly symmetrical 2 window west front with doorway slightly right of middle. C20 door. Circa late C19 4-pane horned sashes.

List Entry Number: 1328420 AVONDALE OYSTER COTTAGE, Gweek (Grade II)

Terrace of 4 cottages. Circa mid-late C19. Killas rubble with granite dressings. Grouted scantle slate roof over Nos. 3 and 4, asbestos slate over Nos. 1 and 2. Brick chimneys over the gable ends and over the central party wall. Cast-iron ogee-section gutters. Plan: Double depth plan of 2 identical pairs of cottages, each with one room at the front and with their entrances together at the middle. Exterior: 2 storeys. 2 identical pairs of cottages each pair with symmetrical 2 window fronts with 2 doorways together at the middle. Panelled doors

with overlights except for No. 4 which has C20 door. Possibly original 12-pane horned sashes. Interior: not inspected.
List Entry Number: 1161385 5 AND 6, POST OFFICE ROW, Gweek (Grade II)

Pair of cottages. Circa mid-late C19. Killas rubble with granite dressings. Asbestos slate roof with brick chimneys over gable end, right, and party wall, left. Plan: Double depth plan pair of identical (mirror-image-plan) cottages, each with one room at the front and with their entrances together at the middle. Exterior: 2 storeys. Pair of cottages with symmetrical 2 window front and pair of doorways together at the middle. Original 4-panel doors with overlights. Possibly original 12-pane horned sashes. Interior: not inspected.