

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ALTERATIONS TO THE GARAGE, ANCILLARY TO THE COTTAGE, SPELDHURST HILL

This design and access statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for alterations to an ancillary garage building which forms part of the curtilage of the Grade II listed Cottage, Speldhurst Hill.

Pre-application advice was sought in July 2023 and subsequently a site visit was held with Kirsty Minney, a planning officer from the local planning authority on 10th August. On 15th September a letter was issued setting out the pre-application response and stated that it was felt the proposed changes are considered to retain the existing character of this curtilage listed building and support could be given to this proposal.

Property Summary

- This enquiry relates to a detached outbuilding/garage positioned within the curtilage of a detached dwelling located on the western side of Speldhurst Hill within the Speldhurst Conservation Area. The dwelling is a grade II listed building.
- The garage is located to the southeast of the dwelling, within the rear garden, and is accessed directly from Speldhurst Hill. There is parking available to the front of the garage for at least two cars.
- The garage is of brick construction with a plain tiled roof. The main garage door is on the west elevation but there are additional openings on the north elevation facing into the garden.
- The garage is of 20th century construction and is likely to have been built at some point between the wars or prior to 1948. In this case, due to its connection to the listed building and its age it is considered to be a curtilage listed building.
- Listed Building Consent was granted in 2012 for alterations to this garage under application 12/03450/LBC and this included widening the garage door.

Project scope

- A survey has revealed the peg roof tiles to the ancillary garage are in need of replacement, so there is a need to replace the existing roof coverings to protect the building fabric. It is proposed to use peg-tiles similar in appearance to existing.
- [REDACTED]
- Associated upgrades to the building fabric include internal insulation, secondary glazing and replacement of the existing garage door with an insulated timber-clad wall.
- The proposed alterations would use materials that are sympathetic to the original building.

Location

- The Cottage is located on a steep bank adjacent to the sweeping lane of Speldhurst Hill, opposite St Mary's Church and graveyard. The dwelling and gardens are raised above street level on battered banks.
- The garage is set back from the cottage and is accessed by right of way from a tarmac driveway shared with the neighbouring property Ardlui.
- The Cottage is sited in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty forming part of the High Weald Special Landscape Area, and is also within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

- The Cot age is within the Speldhurst Conservation Area, although the ancillary garage appears to be just outside the boundary as indicated on the Speldhurst CA Map.

Building Listing

- The Cot age is Grade II Listed (listing reference: 1241626) and is one of a good group of listed buildings in the vicinity of the Church of St Mary.
- The listing description describes The Cot age as mid C17 with some C19 and C20 modernisation. Timber-framed on coursed sandstone footings. Framing is exposed on the front and left end walls, rest clad with peg-tile. Ground floor front is underbuilt with Flemish bond brick with decorative burnt headers. Brick stack, maybe with stone base, brick chimney shaft including some old brick. Peg-tile roof.
- The listing does not specifically mention the ancillary garage, however as this forms part of the curtilage of The Cot age so planning and listed building consent is required for the proposed alterations and replacement of the roof finishes.

Historic Significance

- A brief archaeological Interpretive Survey was carried out in 1997 by University College London, and a subsequent Heritage Statement was produced for a planning application for alterations to the boundary wall and access driveway to The Cot age (19/01619/FULL, approved September 2019). This detailed many of the features of the original C17 three bay range.
- 'The main range incorporated a cellar at the northern end, on the ground floor a northern hall (heated by a two flue chimney set within the original bay), with a 2 roomed service area to the south. On the first floor were two chambers with a close to the side of the chimney and above were garret rooms in the roof., Along the front wall was incorporated a pentice roof, possibly suggesting that one of the service rooms ... may have functioned as a shop'.
- 'The location of either four or six windows is known. Of these, that serving the rear service room shows the best detail. This was of close mullioned type having three diamond shaped mullions, almost certainly unglazed'.
- 'During the C19 extensions were added to the northern end of the house. The western of the extensions included an exceedingly deep, rock cut well.'
- The Heritage Statement concluded that The Cot age had some evidential, historic and aesthetic significance and minor historic communal significance, and is described as having 'no architectural pretensions, nevertheless, it remains a good example of residential building of the period'.
- The ancillary garage building is not outlined in detail in either the survey or listing entry but is similar in character and appearance to the main cot age building, with a similar peg-tile roof. The building is currently used as a garage but is likely to have been used as a workshop prior to being converted, and there is evidence of a previous WC having been removed, with the SVP remaining in place.

Proposed Design

- This design includes works required to facilitate the conversion of the garage to ancillary habitable accommodation (home office) and the alterations to the building.
- Where the peg-tiles are being replaced it is proposed that these are in keeping with the existing tiles.

- The most significant alteration to the appearance of the building is the replacement of the existing garage door with a new insulated wall on the West elevation.
- It is proposed to form this wall in blackened timber in keeping with the black timber framing used throughout, while allowing this new element to be read as an infill feature distinct to the flank walls that are formed in red mullock stock brick.
- A panel of fixed timber-framed glazing is set within this wall, allowing light into the entranceway, while adding character to the elevation.
- A similarly detailed triangular window would replace timber vent panel at high level on the North Elevation and would be accompanied by a new flush conservation-style rooflight to increase the amount of natural light within the building.
- Other proposed alterations to make the garage suitable as a study space include:
 - o Insulating the walls and roof on the inside
 - o Replacing the existing sloped concrete floor with a new insulated floor slab
 - o Form a WC space and connect to the existing drainage
 - o Refurbishing existing timber doors and weather sealing
 - o Introducing secondary glazing to existing windows
 - o Installing electric heating

As highlighted in the pre-application advice, in terms of the assessment of the listed building consent application, the main consideration would be the impact that the proposed alterations would have on the character, appearance, historic fabric and overall significance of this curtilage listed building. In terms of the assessment of the planning application additional consideration would be given to the impact that the changes have on the wider character of the area, particularly as this falls within the Conservation Area and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, the impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings and the potential impact on parking provision and highway safety would need to be considered.

Impact on curtilage listed building:

- Steps have been taken to ensure the design is in keeping with the character, appearance and fabric of the listed building.
- The proposed alterations have been designed using materials that are in keeping with the design and spirit of the original garage building, and the curtilage itself. In particular, the new cladding is proposed to be a blackened larch, which references the existing black timber detailing.
- New fixed-light windows will be formed in blackened timber joinery and the new rooflight will be a conservation-style rooflight that sits flush with the roof tiles (VELUX Heritage conservation roof window FC06 66x118)
- Careful thought has been given to the specification of the replacement roof tiles, which are proposed to be Spicer Handmade Clay Medium Antique Peg Tile (ref: SKU MEDSPICE2). These tiles have an imperfect handmade quality and natural colour variation.

Material references:

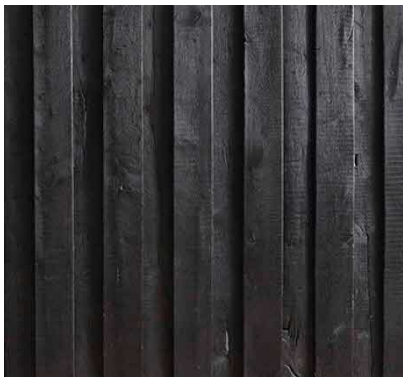
Velux Heritage conserva on rooflights:



Spicer handmade clay peg tiles:



Black larch cladding:



Wider visual impact:

- The proposed alterations are in keeping with the character of the conservation area and the alterations will not impact wider public views so would not have a significant impact on the AONB.

Impact on residential amenity:

- The proposed use as a home office (a use ancillary to the dwelling) is unlikely to result in a significant disturbance to neighbouring properties above what would normally be expected for residential use.
- The proposed glazing at roof level and on the West elevation does not directly face the neighbouring property and would not result in any additional overlooking or loss of privacy.

Parking provision:

- At present there is parking available in front of the garage for two cars and this would be retained. This would be considered sufficient parking for this dwelling and so the loss of the garage (currently not used for parking in any case) would not have an impact on parking provision.

Access statement:

The main access to the converted home office will be via an existing door that will be refurbished and brought back into use. The replacement of the existing sloped concrete floor slab means the new floor will be set level and will provide step-free access from the garden.