

Heritage, Design and Access statements for The Pool Cottage, High Street, Acton, Suffolk CO10 0AJ

Permission requested to carry out the following works to the above property.

Installation of a French drain to the rear of the property; removal of concrete render across the rear lower portion of the back wall and replacement of this concrete render with lime plaster repainting this section with lime wash; removing the bitumen covering of the first layer of bricks under the sole plate and repointing with lime mortar, replacing any bricks if required with the same type; repair of part of the rear sole plate; re-pointing of central chimney stack and capping to prevent water ingress; replacement of cast iron down pipe to the front of the property, minor repair to previously repaired lead flashing at the front juncture with the newer extension area and removal of render to the front and side lower sections of external wall to be a height of 1.5m, to be replaced with lime plaster and lime wash.

Heritage Statement

This statement provides consideration of the relevant aspects regarding the works proposed at The Pool Cottage, a Grade II Listed building. The property is registered at Historic England, under List Entry Number 1036722 with the following description:

A C17-C18 timber-framed and plastered house. 2 storeys. 4 window range, casements partly with lattice leaded lights and partly glazing bars. Roof thatched, with a central chimney stack.

The external walls of the cottage have at some point pre-listing, been covered in a concrete render. The original external features of the cottage that are still exposed are the oak sole plate; which in some places is rotting away due to the concrete render preventing breathability of the timber and lathe frame underneath and the bitumen coating of the bricks directly underneath and the original chimney stack; which appears to have its pointing previously repaired with concrete rather than lime mortar. Photographs of these areas are attached with the application and can also be found in the report from the Chartered Surveyor.

Design and Access Statement

The full details of the required repair works are provided below.

- 1. Installation of a French drain to the rear of the property.** A building survey carried out by a qualified Chartered Surveyor in 2021, (attached separately for reference), noted the high levels of water retention in the rear wall of the cottage and the deterioration of a section of the rear sole plate also due to high water retention. There is a gravel area directly to the rear of the back wall; however, this is full of soil and water is not draining away from the rear of the property. The recommendation of the surveyor was that some form of drainage be installed; ideally a French drain, to allow for water to be removed quickly away from the rear of the cottage. The rear wall is also North facing and so does not receive sufficient sunlight to allow it to dry out naturally. A discussion with a local conservation and restoration company who works with listed buildings regularly has recommended that a French drain be installed to the rear of the property with the water draining either into an existing inspection chamber or the well, which is located in the garden, just to the other side of the rear of the cottage. The works would require the existing soil to be removed; a gradient slope created away from the rear of the cottage; a pipe installed with drainage holes and then the area backfilled with gravel to allow free flow of the water away from the cottage. Once completed; there would be no visible change to the rear of the cottage.

- 2. Removal of concrete render to the height of 1.5m from above the sole plate to the rear of the property.** All external walls of the entire property have at some point been rendered in concrete, preventing the building from being able to breathe. This is resulting in water being retained in the north facing rear wall of the cottage and leading to high moisture readings. The internal plaster (which is also not lime) is beginning to crack and come away from the lathe structure due to the high moisture reading. This is highlighted in the attached report from the chartered surveyor. In addition to the installation of a French drain, the request is that the bottom 1.5m of concrete render be removed from the rear external wall, the wooden beams underneath be treated, any damaged lathes and boards repaired and then covered over with lime plaster to allow the water to evaporate and dry out. Once dry the external lime plaster would then be coated in a lime wash in a colour that matches the remainder of the cottage; which is a light beige.
- 3. Removal of the bitumen coating the lowest layer of bricks underneath the sole plate and repointing with lime mortar.** Underneath the sole plate are a layer of bricks which at some point in the past have been covered with bitumen. This covering is also aiding water retention from the ground directly underneath the sole plate. The proposal is that the bitumen cover is removed in full, from the bricks all the way around the property and then where required damaged bricks are replaced with the same type and re-pointing is carried out with lime mortar to ensure full breathability of the lowest level of the cottage as it rests on the ground.
- 4. Repair of part of the rear sole plate.** As identified in the attached report from the Chartered Surveyor, a section of the rear sole plate has deteriorated and become rotten due to the retention of water in the wall directly above and below the sole plate itself. From the information set out in the report and from a further inspection by a conservation builder, the proposal is to cut out the damaged and rotten section of the sole plate and splice in a new section, using treated green oak, which will soon age and blend in with the existing oak sole plate, ensuring that the strength, integrity and resilience of the sole plate is maintained. Once the other works have been carried out to prevent water retention in this section of the wall; this repaired section should remain stable and dry with the sections of wall above and below able to breathe.
- 5. Re-pointing of central chimney stack with lime mortar and capping to prevent water ingress.** The central chimney stack continues all the way down inside the cottage to the ground floor. Some of the internal bricks are starting to crumble and disintegrate and the cause of this action appears to high moisture content. The proposed solution is to ensure that the top of the chimney stack is re-pointed, where necessary, with lime mortar. The repair is not seeking to remove all existing concrete mortar, only to replace any missing mortar with lime mortar to ensure that the chimney is watertight. The chimney will also be capped to prevent water ingress. It is currently open to the elements and internal bricks are showing high moisture content readings. Due to the height of the central chimney stack, this repair work will require scaffolding to be erected to the central front and rear sections of the cottage. There are no identified access issues as a result, as the land surrounding the cottage is completely contained within the garden area, both to the front and the rear.

- 6. Replacement of the cast iron down pipe to the front of the cottage.** There is an existing cast iron down pipe to the front of the property which allows clean water from the upstairs bathroom to flow into the front drain. This has become corroded and a like for like cast iron replacement is requested to be installed. There will be no visual adverse impact to the property as a replacement cast iron downpipe will be provided which is of a very similar traditional style, if not identical.
- 7. Replacement of the lead flashing which is sited at a roof juncture between an extension and the main building.** The flashing was previously repaired as per the permission granted in the previous application for this property but has continued to leak and so some follow up repair work is required to ensure that this junction remains watertight. This will require a replacement of the lead flashing that was installed with a new piece of lead flashing; ensuring that any minute gaps above the flashing are also sealed to prevent water ingress. This will be a like for like repair and there will be no visual change to the front of the cottage.
- 8. Removal of the lower 1.5m of any other sections of concrete render in the same manner on the side and front facia of the cottage and replacement with lime plaster and lime wash.** When undertaking inspections of the outside walls of the cottage with regards to water retention, it became apparent that some of the concrete render is coming away from the front facing wall near to the central chimney stack. Whilst remedial work is not being undertaken as an immediate priority, permission is also sought to be able to remove the concrete render to a height of 1.5M and carry out any suitable repairs to the underlying lathe, treating any beams that are covered with the concrete render and then covering the external wall with a lime plaster which will subsequently be covered with a lime wash in the same colour as the rest of the cottage.

All work proposed in this statement has considered the architectural and historic importance of the building. There is no proposed change to the design of the cottage and all work is proposed to be in line with the nature and character of the historic building and if the work is approved, there should be no visible change to the current visual appearance. The only change will be that defective materials will have been replaced with traditional materials; allowing water to egress from the cottage and to breathe as it was originally designed to, removing the build-up of moisture in the sole plate, external walls and chimney stack.

All of the repairs proposed to the property and chimney will have no adverse impact on access to the property. Repair works can be carried out from within the property boundary, with no impact on neighbouring properties or the public highway to the front of the property. Scaffolding will be required to allow for the re-pointing and capping of the central chimney stack, but this will be contained completely within the property footprint. A skip will be required to allow for the removal of the concrete render from the rear wall of the cottage. This skip can be located completely within the front driveway of the property and will not adversely impact the main footway through the village.

All materials used will be traditional materials, improving the historic quality and heritage of the cottage. Sections of concrete render will be replaced with lime plaster, which will then be coated with a lime wash. Any repair to the oak sole plate will be carried out with green oak, which will blend in with the existing sole plate very quickly. Any replacement bricks required under the sole plate will be of the same type as is already in place and re-pointing to brick work will be carried out with lime mortar.

There is no proposed change to the design of the cottage, ensuring the sensitive preservation of the design of the historic building and if the repair work is approved, there should be no visible change to the current appearance. Please note that the quote attached to support the detail of the work to be carried out states 'Thatched Cottage' but it refers to The Pool Cottage as a thatched cottage at High Street Acton.

There has been no consultation carried out as the work is to repair defective materials which are currently causing water ingress to the listed building. If the works are approved, there will be no visible change from the outside of the property that would impact the historic nature of the building, and no issues of access for neighbouring properties or pedestrians walking on the village road to the front of the property during the works.