

CONSERVATION AREA HERITAGE STATEMENT

Project: Alterations and Extensions to Gate House Cottage, Risby

Client: Mothersole Builders – 4592

Date: October 2023



The application site is a Listed property (Reference **1031398** TL 86 NW RISBY SCHOOL ROAD

4/91 The Gate House Cottage -
Grade - II

Cottage, early C18. 1 storey, attics, dormers. Lobby entry at axial chimney stack. Timber-framed, rendered with herring bone pattern, thatched. C19/C20 casements.

Listing NGR: TL8028066369

Date first listed: 2nd September 1983

Context

The Cottage sits within its own substantial garden within the Settlement Boundary in the village of Risby. Adjacent to the property to the East, is another Listed Building, the Gate House which is also Grade II Listed and to the West is the site is the churchyard and the Church of St. Giles.

Our proposal is some distance from both properties but can be seen from both and Church Road. The site also sits within the Conservation area of Risby. This has a varied character but in this part of the Village predominantly made up of individual properties with reasonably sized gardens. Some of the development is linear running parallel to the road although the set back from the edge of the road varies considerably along the road frontage. There are a number of examples near to the site where there is development in depth perpendicular to the Church Road, with properties running back into the depth of sites.

Apart from the building itself, the main contribution that the site makes to the Conservation area is the substantial brick and flint walling which edges the site to the main road. At some 1.9 metres tall it provides quite a significant screen to the site. The open space in front of the cottage and to the side, also contributes to the Conservation area as it provides a "soft corner" to the street and the transition into the churchyard adjacent. Within the garden are a number of trees which also make a positive contribution.

Site History

The cottage itself has had little or no attention since the mid-20th Century. The last application we can see on the Council website was an approval for the formation of a vehicular access into the site though the brick and flint wall on the road frontage, Planning reference E/77/2874/P which was back in 1977.

We believe that around the time of Listing, there were major renovation works carried out to the property which involved the replacement of a number of the windows, replacement of all the ground floors and the rebuilding of all of the brick plinths. At the same time, bathrooms and a kitchen were fitted and a new brick hearth added with an alteration to the chimney stack. One of the more significant changes involved taking out the original staircase and its replacement with a modern softwood straight flight stair. The insertion of this stair has made it a very much more practical option for the then owner to make best use of the first floor.

There were also significant single storey extensions and alterations works carried to link the cottage onto the adjoining property, the Gate House, which was then in the same ownership. This was principally done in Fletton brickwork and all of the single storey element was completely remodelled.

The Proposal

The existing cottage will require extensive renovation which will involve stripping the building back to its main frame and will no doubt at that stage, require a good deal of like for like frame repair and replacement as there has been elements of the frame where the building has suffered from long term water ingress. Having stripped the building back to the frame, we will then be insulating it and re-rendering in lime render with matching herringbone pattern to match the existing. The later works to the chimney stack and a secondary fire surround will be taken out and all of the windows themselves refurbished. The modern staircase will be removed and replaced with a more contemporary timber and glazed stair within the same opening. The level of accommodation in the main house will be reduced with the intention that the main family living accommodation will be located in the new extensions.

The investment in the restoration of the main cottage including the re-thatching will be considerable, but we feel will be well worth while as part of a larger scheme to create a family property. Most of the living accommodation explained, will be in an extension to the rear of the site which we have designed in a contemporary form as almost a 'stealth' reflection of the main Cottage itself. This extension will take the form of a substantially glazed link between the old and new structure, with a 1 ½ storey cottage form building at one end, which will balance out and mirror the existing Cottage. The new works will be in contemporary style and materials with Shou Sugi Ban burnt timber cladding, with a zinc roof but they will match the scale and form of the existing cottage.

We have introduced a "separating wall" between these two structures which provides the dividing line between the old and new and will act as a visual break. This wall will run through the link structure in brick and flint and will curve down at ground level to form a gateway to the rear garden. The gate itself will be the gate the original house owner acquired on their travels in Europe in the early 20th Century which was never installed on the site as originally intended. This was the gate to which the name 'Gate House' referred.

We have had extensive discussions with Christine Leveson, the Conservation Officer, on site to look at the existing cottage and also to discuss the design proposals for this scheme. I am pleased to confirm that she is happy with this contemporary approach which she feels will sit comfortably in the setting in this Listed Building, the neighbouring structures and the wider Conservation area.

Conclusion

We believe this innovative design solution will make a positive contribution to the village and will be an attractive foil to the Listed cottage whilst allowing its intrinsic beauty and simplicity to stand out. Our work will involve no loss of Historic fabric and most importantly will allow for the total renovation of the existing cottage which it badly needs. We believe that the completed project will make a wonderful village property and the Cottage will then be fit for purpose for the many generations to come.