

Proposals for:

**Ground floor bedroom extension, revised entrance hall,
structural strengthening and general repair works**

at

Chapel Cottage, Church Road

Market Weston, Suffolk IP22 2NX



Design, Access & Heritage Statement

November 2023

1. Introduction

Chapel Cottage is a two-storey thatched cottage, Listed Grade II and previously extended. The dwelling is the householders' main residence.

There is now an urgent requirement to provide a ground floor bedroom and associated WC facilities to improve the quality of life and living conditions of the householders.

There are three key aspects to these new proposals:

- A. Alterations to the rear part to:
 - a. replace and enlarge the existing modern glazed lobby to create an entrance hall.
 - b. Relocate the study and extend the existing study area to create a ground floor bedroom with ensuite.
- B. Structural improvement at the main house to stabilise the timber frame around the existing stair.
- C. Utilities works
- D. General repair works to the main Cottage including:
 - a. replacement of thatch.
 - b. repair/replacement of existing timber windows.
 - c. repairs to render.
 - d. thermal upgrades.

2. CONTEXT

The Building

For as-existing site photographs see below and also drawing 2316.03.

Chapel Cottage is Grade II listed, list entry number: 1283640.

Listing details:

Former farmhouse. Circa 1600. One-and-a-half storeys; 3-cell plan; 4 bays. Timber-framed and rendered; thatched roof; internal chimney-stack with a plain white brick shaft. The apex of the north-east gable is infill led with black knapped random flints. 3 small-paned 2-light casement windows and 2 eyebrow dormers; that to the right of the stack is a mid-C20 insertion. Plank door. Widely-spaced plain framing and joists set flat. The service end (south-west) is still divided into 2, but the partition wall has been removed and a C20 partition set about 1 foot away. Main beams with chamfer and curved stops, that in the parlour with an additional groove. Open fireplaces in both main ground-storey rooms with plain timber lintels. Diagonal pegging in the north-east gable wall indicates that there were originally small projecting windows to both storeys. Upper doorways with the jambs formed of naturally curved timbers have been fitted into the tie-beams with dovetail halvings; those to each side of the stack appear to be original. Side purlin roof.

The current layout of the Cottage, typical for the age of the property, has living accommodation on the ground floor with sleeping on the first floor accessed via a modern, narrow straight flight stair, which has had some modifications to facilitate accessibility.

Although the Cottage is sound and habitable, like all period properties it requires maintenance and upkeep. Some elements of the fabric and structure are now in need of repair and refreshing. Therefore, it is also intended to address various replacement, upgrade and repair works to maintain and continue to conserve the property.

Planning History

In 1992 planning permission and listed building consent were granted for the large single storey rear living room extension and glazed link, to extend an existing brick and flint outbuilding (currently the study) and connect it to the main Cottage.

The dwelling sits in a large mature garden, bounded by maintained hedging and mature planting; the south aspect of the Cottage is visible from Church Road, although the planting and narrow highway constrain this view. The proposed alterations are limited to the area immediately behind the Cottage and will not be significantly visible from Church Road.

Pre-application submission

A pre-application enquiry was submitted to West Suffolk Planning Department on 15 September 2023.

The proposals were discussed on site with the LPA's Principal Conservation Officer, Christine Leveson, on 25 October 2023. In general, the submitted proposals were considered to be acceptable, with the exception of the entrance hall design which intersected with the existing roofs. A revised design for the entrance hall was discussed and is included in this planning and listed building consent application.

3. PROPOSALS

Design Proposals

Please refer also to proposal drawings

A. Alterations to the rear part to:

Replace and extend the existing modern glazed lobby to create an entrance hall. The hall will enable direct access to the new bedroom via a new internal door.

The existing (currently external) finish of brick and flint panels will be retained within the new entrance hall.

At the main Cottage the dining room is currently accessed via a narrow inner lobby off the entrance lobby, shared with access to the existing toilet/utility. The dining room's existing north window will become internal and therefore somewhat redundant. The window will be removed and the structural opening extended down to the floor. The inner lobby will be integrated into the enlarged WC/utility space.

At east and west sides the new entrance hall will include new timber-framed full-height glazing and doors, with an oak-clad entrance screen.

The flat-roofed design facilitates integration of a central linear rooflight for daylight and ventilation. It enables maintenance access along the perimeter of the flat roof. The flat roof will not intersect the existing pitched roofs adjacent.

The proposed new entrance hall offers the opportunity to introduce better insulation and thermal efficiency to this part of the property. A beneficial by-product of the wider roof is the increased collection of rainwater run-off from the thatch, which currently causes some standing water to the rear of the Cottage. This will also be alleviated by the introduction of revised landscape to falls and gully drainage.

Extend the existing study area to create a ground floor bedroom with ensuite WC. This proposal extrudes the form of the existing study at the east side. External materials at the extension will replicate the existing, with red multi-stock facing brick, flint panels and clay pantiles.

New aluminium-framed fenestration at the east side will follow the pattern of that at the living room and enable easy access and views from the bedroom to the garden.

The study will be relocated to the existing sitting room at the east end of the Cottage.

- B. **Structural improvement** at the main Cottage to stabilise the timber frame around the existing stair. It is thought that previous alterations to the stair may have compromised the existing timber frame which is evidenced by some minor movement in the South elevation. A structural assessment has been carried out and remedial works have been recommended to strengthen and brace the framing members over the stair.

C. **Utilities works**

Remove existing oil-fired central heating boiler. Install new condensing boiler in existing outbuilding, with below-ground flow/return pipework to main dwelling.

Install photovoltaic panels at front roof pitch of existing outbuilding.

General below-ground drainage improvement works, including a new soakaway at the rear garden.

Installation of new mains electricity supply to dwelling, with new meter to be positioned at existing outbuilding.

- D. **General repair works** to the main Cottage including:

Replacement of thatch.

Replacement of four of the existing modern timber windows, in a pattern with reduced mullion spacing, more appropriate to the age of the dwelling. Retained modern windows will be overhauled and redecorated.

Repairs to external render, generally using lime render, either self-coloured or with limewash.

Thermal upgrades within the existing timber frame generally. It is anticipated that the material specification will be conditioned and agreed in due course.

E. ACCESS

The main dwelling's main access point is at the west side of the existing lobby. The proposals retain and enhance that arrangement.

The new entrance hall will have flush thresholds at its two external doors, at east and west sides.

All door thresholds around the proposed ground floor bedroom and the bedroom external door will be flush.

5. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The potential impact of the proposed bedroom and the new entrance hall extensions on the existing cottage has been carefully considered from the inception of these proposals. The proposed extensions has been modelled and renderings considered during design development, to enable repeated assessments of the potential impact.

The proposed extensions relate to the rear (north) of the original cottage, where they will not be significantly visible from the public realm.

The assessment of effects of the proposals on the significance of the buildings is based on the planning application drawings. The impact assessment below provides a commentary on the effects, or impact, of the proposals on the heritage significance of Chapel Cottage. Impacts can be adverse, neutral or beneficial to the significance of a building, and can be ranked as follows:

- Considerable - Likely to result in change that affects materially significance and would require strong justification;
- High - Likely to result in change that affects significance and requiring justification, but capable of mitigation and resulting in less than substantial harm;
- Moderate - Likely to result in limited change to the fabric that does not materially affect significance but may require explanation or justification;
- Low - Very limited effects on the built fabric resulting in no material change to significance;
- Neutral - Change with no affects in the significance of the building or its setting.

Built Feature: Existing modern, pitched-roof entrance lobby.

Significance: Low.

Proposal: The existing lobby will be removed and replaced with the proposed new entrance hall.

Impact: Neutral/positive.

Commentary: The two existing side walls of the lobby are largely glazed. The low-pitched roof replaced a former glass roof and its lead ridge has become detached. The lobby has minimal thermal value and, if retained, would need extensive repair.

Built Feature: Existing east gable wall of existing study (former detached outhouse).

Significance: Low. The wall was extensively repaired in the 1990s.

Proposal: The existing gable wall will be removed to enable the proposed bedroom extension.

Impact: Low.

Commentary: The proposals include reconstruction and, effectively, relocation of the east gable, to enable the proposed bedroom extension. The new gable will be constructed to precisely match the brick pattern of the existing gable wall.

Built Feature: Window opening at north side of existing dining area at Cottage. Opening to be extended down to floor and up to ceiling to create access opening between dining area and proposed new entrance hall.

Significance: Moderate to low. Openings at the north side elevation of the Cottage have previously been altered. The existing opening lacks a visible head member. The photograph below indicates a possible previous opening to the right of the existing window.

Proposal: The existing modern painted softwood window frame will be removed. The existing studs adjacent the existing window opening will be retained. The existing sole plate below the window may be unoriginal as its profile varies considerably. It is proposed to remove the sole plate between the two jamb studs and the plinth below, to enable a flush floor. A small infill section of the same profile as the existing retained sole plate will be inserted below the LH jamb.

The opening height will be extended up to the underside of the retained head beam, requiring removal of the two existing truncated stud sections over the existing window.

The existing radiator will be relocated adjacent the enlarged opening.



Existing north window

Impact: Low.

Commentary: The proposal was discussed on site with the LPA's Principal Conservation Officer on 25 October 2023 and agreed in principle. The proposed enlarged opening will greatly improve the accessibility of the Cottage.

Built Feature: Internal door in Cottage between existing sitting and dining rooms to be repositioned.

Significance: Low. The existing door position does not appear to be original.

Proposal: The internal door will be repositioned to enable a more direct route between the proposed study (existing sitting room) and the dining room. The change will also provide additional usable space at the corner of the room and it will enable the proposed storage cupboard below the stair (see below).

Impact: Low.

Commentary: rebates in the underside of the head beam over suggest that the current door position is not be original. The proposal reinstates the earlier position of the door, (likely to have accessed the former winder stair adjacent the chimney). The proposal will require removal of the exposed stud currently positioned between the door and the chimney. The stud appears to be smooth-planed and not original. The existing door lining is modern.



Existing door between dining and sitting rooms

Built Feature: Existing modern closed-riser stair in Cottage.

Significance: Low. The existing stair was installed in the 1980s.

Proposal: The space below the modern stair will be infilled with timber-framed studwork with timber vertical board cladding to create a storage cupboard.

Impact: Low.

Commentary: The new cupboard will be limited to the area below the stair.



Existing modern stair

Built Feature: Proposed structural bracing at existing structural frame over existing stair. See submitted Structural Engineer's drawing 23-070-D1-A.

Significance: Moderate.

Proposal: It appears that the structural frame was altered when the stair was installed, truncating the transverse tie beam at 1st floor level. This appears to have precipitated some movement at the front wall. The proposed structural steel bracing bracket will improve the structural connection between the front wall, over the existing 1st floor bedroom door, to the existing transverse structure inboard of the stair.

Impact: Low.

Commentary: The proposed steel bracing bracket will largely be concealed above the sloping ceiling over the stair and above the flat ceiling over the landing. Exposed parts of the bracket will be painted satin white, to match adjacent internal wall/ceiling finishes.



Existing modern stair, showing truncated transverse tie beam.

Built Feature: Internal alterations at ground floor bathroom/utility.

Significance: Low.

Proposal: Alterations to layout of modern studwork partitions to incorporate existing modern internal lobby into utility/WC.

Impact: Low.

Commentary: Proposal includes removal of modern plank door in modern lining, between inner lobby and dining room. Opening to be infilled, finished to match existing studwork adjacent.



Existing door between dining area and inner lobby

Built Feature: Construction of proposed entrance hall, to north side of existing Cottage.

Significance: Moderate/Low.

Proposal: The new flat roof has low parapets at both east and west ends and projects beyond the end elevations, to provide shelter over the proposed external doors.

The proposed linear rooflight includes some opening lights, for ventilation. The rooflight's central position is clear of the existing buildings and allows maintenance access along both flanks.

At the west and east end elevations glazed frames intersect with the existing buildings. At the west end an Oak-clad panel includes the entrance door and provides some privacy from the approach.

Impact: Low.

Commentary: An earlier design for the new entrance hall included a pitched roof intersected with the existing pitched roofs at both sides. The proposed flat roof enables simpler connections to the north side of the cottage and the south side of the existing north wing, below existing eaves levels at both sides.

Built Feature: Proposed ground floor extension at existing study, to create a bedroom extension, with associated internal alterations.

Significance: Low.

Proposal: The proposal extrudes the form of the existing study (former outbuilding) by approximately 3.5m at the east end. The proposal includes removal of the existing garden water feature. Internally, the proposal includes new partitions to separate the west end of the space, which serves as the route to the adjacent living room to the north, and to create a small ensuite WC adjacent the bedroom.

The existing roof form, with internal space open to the slope, will be retained and repeated at the new part.

The existing south window opening, which will relate to the new entrance hall, will be extended vertically, to create a door opening with a pair of small door leaves with angled reveals. The existing brick/flint finishes will be replicated at the new east extension and retained within the entrance hall.

Impact: Low/Neutral.

Commentary: This proposal relates only to the former outbuilding, which is not mentioned in the Listing text. Impact on the Cottage is controlled by limiting the eastward extension to the line of the jamb at the Cottage's existing north-east window.

The east end of the outhouse was formerly rebuilt. The proposed use of existing materials and finishes for the extension should enable a "seamless" connection between old and new parts.

Built Feature: Replacement of first floor windows at both gables of Cottage and two ground floor windows at west end of Cottage.

Significance: Low. These window frames are modern and not to a pattern which relates particularly well to the age of the dwelling. The windows include single, central mullions generally (two mullions at west gable), with some opening and some fixed casement frames. The casements are overly wide. Whilst the existing windows were all apparently replaced at the same time (1980s, perhaps) and are of consistent design it is typical for windows in buildings of this type to be of mixed pattern.

Whilst the two gable windows are perhaps the most visible from the highway, these four existing windows, being of modern pattern, do not make a particularly positive contribution to the significance of the dwelling.

Proposal: Replacement of four modern single-glazed softwood windows, which are in need of repair and redecoration.

It is proposed to replace these selected windows with new Oak window frames, each with two mullions, central flush casements, bead-glazed fixed lights, and “slimlite” double glazing.

The new windows will be installed into the existing structural openings.

Impact: Neutral/Positive.

Commentary: Historic England guidance *Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures* includes the following advice:
Where historic windows have been replaced with ones whose design does not follow historic patterns, these are unlikely to contribute to the significance of listed buildings. Replacing such windows with new windows of a sympathetic historic pattern, whether single-glazed or incorporating slim-profile double-glazing, may cause no additional harm. It also provides an opportunity to enhance the significance of the building, which is the desired outcome under national policy.

Compared to the existing windows the proportions of the proposed replacement windows, with reduced mullion spacing and casement width will relate better to the historic building and enhance its significance.

The proposed double-glazing will help to reduce heat loss and condensation on the panes.

The use of naturally durable timber will reduce the maintenance requirement.



Existing east gable



Existing west gable



Historic view of east gable, showing former gable window
(East lean-to removed previously)

6. CONCLUSION

The proposals have been very carefully considered and discussed in detail with the Council's Principal Conservation Officer. They will greatly enhance the function, efficiency and condition of the dwelling, helping to protect Chapel Cottage, the heritage asset.

The impact of the proposals on the Cottage is overwhelmingly positive and we commend them as worthy of planning permission and listed building consent.







