

# OLD BEAMS, 145 THE HILL, BURFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

## HERITAGE STATEMENT



JPHERITAGE

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**PROJECT:** Old Beams, 145 The Hill, Burford, Oxfordshire

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## OLD BEAMS, BURFORD - HERITAGE STATEMENT

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by JP Heritage Ltd on behalf of Stone Manor Construction Ltd to inform proposed alterations at Old Beams, Burford. Old Beams is a Grade II listed building located within the Burford Conservation Area.
- 1.1.2 The document provides a description of the historic development and significance of the heritage assets and provides an assessment of the heritage impacts of the proposed scheme. This has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the LPA in accordance with paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Revised December 2023).

#### 1.2 Nature of the proposals

- 1.2.2 The proposed scheme is for a replacement stair and replacement windows to the rear of the listed building.

#### 1.3 Heritage designations



Figure 1: Front elevation of Old Beams

- 1.3.1 Old Beams was added to the statutory *List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1955 and the listing amended on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1990. The list description reads as follows:

*Cottage. C17 front altered early-to-mid C19. Rubble with slate roof, brick chimney to left. Single-cell plan with partitions for alley (to South), stairs (North) and lobby. C18 rear wing and later attached premises. 2 storeys. 1 window, sash with vertical glazing bars on 1st floor, glazing-bar sash on ground floor, wooden lintel. Ledged oak alley-way entry to right in chamfered surround; studded passage wall to North (inside), cobbled alley; corbelled side beam to South with close-spaced joists (note the corbel is a re-set piece of moulded window surround or mullion. Occupied c.1643-76 by Roger Daniell, mason, as tenant of the Grammar School.*

- 1.3.2 The majority, if not all, the houses along The Hill are listed buildings. The Old Beams is flanked by two listed buildings (143 and 147) with 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century origins. No. 143 extends to the rear of Old Beams and is accessed by the alleyway on the right hand side of Old Beams.

1.3.3 Old Beams is located within the Burford Conservation Area. This part of the conservation area is characterised by regular rows of stone cottages positioned within long narrow plots.

#### **1.4 References in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (Heritage Gateway)**

1.4.1 The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record notes that Old Beams was previously Basil Cook's cottage. Otherwise, the HER does not provide any information in addition to the listing description for Old Beams.

#### **1.5 Planning history**

1.5.1 There is no planning history for Old Beams.

### **2.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **2.1 NPPF (Revised December 2023)**

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It advises that in determining planning applications '*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to 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* (paragraph 200).

2.1.2 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as being '*a building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.*' Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets.

2.1.3 In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of (paragraph 203):

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.1.4 Specific guidance on the treatment of designated heritage assets (listed buildings) emphasises the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset in order to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 205). It advises that '*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

2.1.5 Paragraph 206 continues by stating that '*any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification*'.

2.1.6 Paragraph 207 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met.

2.1.7 Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 208 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development and, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

## **2.2 West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031)**

2.2.1 The relevant West Oxfordshire Local Plan policies are as follows:

- EH9 – Historic Environment;
- EH10 – Conservation Areas;
- EH11 – Listed Buildings.

2.2.2 Policy EH11 states that:

*Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building, will be permitted where it can be shown to:*

- *conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building's fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting;*
- *respect the building's historic curtilage or context or its value within a group and/or its setting, including its historic landscape or townscape context; and*
- *retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design and form.*



### 3.0 THE HERITAGE ASSET

#### 3.1 Understanding the history of the heritage asset

3.1.1 The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1880) shows the rectangular footprint of Old Beams and a thin narrow garden or access way to the rear.



Figure 2: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1880)

3.1.2 The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1899) doesn't show any changes to the footprint of Old Beams. The District Valuation survey (1910) overlay details onto the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition map do however show that Old Beams formed part of the same ownership and occupancy as 143 The Hill by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

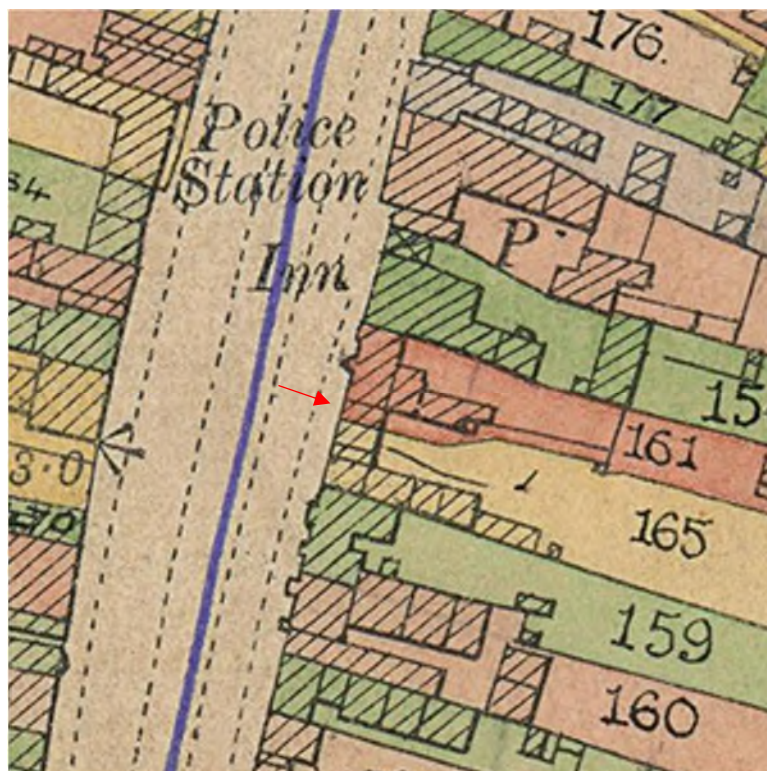


Figure 3: Extract from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1899) with District Valuation Survey details overlaid

- 3.1.3 The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1921) does not show any changes to the footprint or layout of the property at Old Beams.

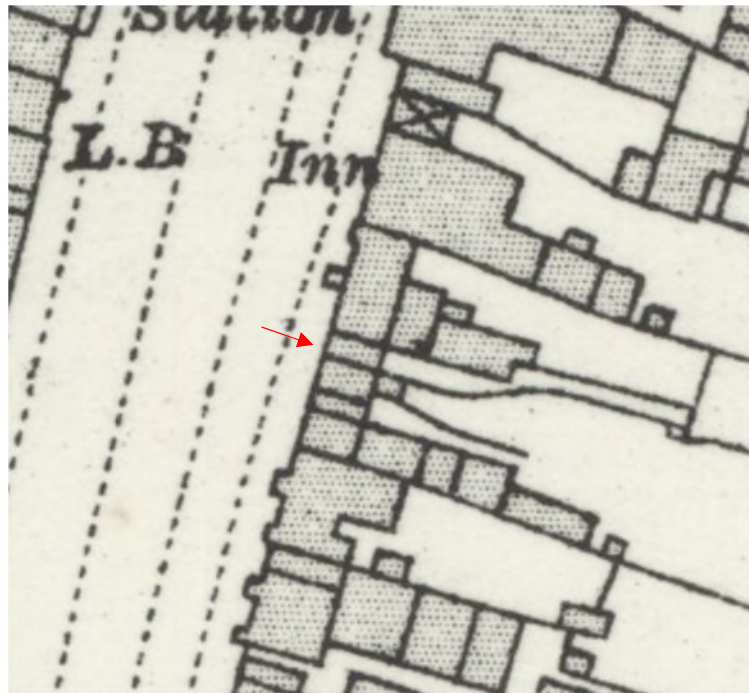


Figure 4: Extract from the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1921)

### 3.2 Understanding the form of the heritage asset

#### Phase 1

- 3.2.1 The original part of Old Beams is a 2-storey, single unit cottage of coursed rubble stone construction that fronts onto The Hill. The front elevation includes a plank and batten door with a timber lintel to an alley-way to the right. Off-centre to the left are a large ground floor window opening with a multi-paned sash window, a smaller 2-over-2 sash window on the first floor and a cellar opening, all with timber lintels. The sills of the ground and first floor windows are oolitic limestone.



Figure 5: Front elevation of Old Beams

- 3.2.2 The rear elevation is mostly masked by the rear extension but the left hand side of the rear elevation remains visible. This is also of coursed rubble stone construction includes a lower



eaves level than the front elevation. The eaves are pierced by a dormer with a concrete sill and a modern upvc window. The ground floor includes the rear part of the alleyway which includes a timber lintel over the opening.



Figure 6: Rear elevation of Phase 1

3.2.3 The alleyway includes a cobbled surface. The floor above is carried on joists which line up with the joists associated with the axial beam on the ground floor. The partition between the alley way and the ground floor of the Phase 1 cottage appears to be of 20<sup>th</sup> century construction and includes an expanded metal lath and plaster finish externally and an upright timber board finish internally.



Figure 7: Alleyway on the southern side of Old Beams

3.2.4 The ground floor is accessed through a modern 20<sup>th</sup> century part-glazed door. The ground floor includes an axial beam with wide chamfers and curved step stops. The joists are wide at around 160mm and include runout stops. These details suggest an early date for this part of the house, possibly late 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is a chimney breast on the northern side of Phase 1. There is a stone lined cellar beneath the ground of Phase 1 which is accessed by concrete steps to one side of the chimney breast. The floor over the cellar includes machine sawn joists

and is a 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement. A 20<sup>th</sup> century balustrade is located at the top of these steps. Also to the right of the chimney breast is a relatively modern spiral staircase.



Figure 8: Detail of the axial beam and joists on the ground floor of Phase 1



Figure 9: Spiral staircase to the right of the stone chimney breast

- 3.2.6 On the first floor there is evidence for a truncated truss which appears to be cruck-like in appearance and includes a trenched purling on the western side. This demonstrates that the original cottage would have had a much lower eaves level. A beam extends westward to support the original truss on the c. 19<sup>th</sup> century wall plate of the alteration to create a 2-storey front elevation.



Figure 10: Truncated truss on the first floor

- 3.2.7 The rear of the first floor has been sub-divided to create a landing. This appears to be a 20<sup>th</sup> century change. The landing at the top of the stairs includes part of a wooden balustrade of 20<sup>th</sup> century date, probably mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. There is also a recess in the wall on the northern side of the current stair which suggests a former opening of some form.

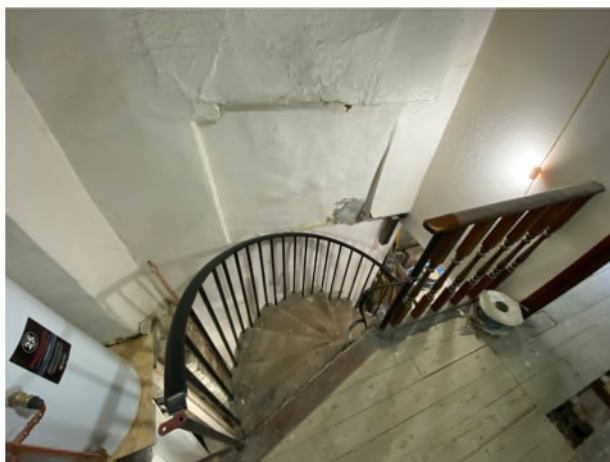


Figure 11: 20<sup>th</sup> century wooden balustrade on the landing at the top of the spiral staircase and a recessed feature in the north wall

## Phase 2

- 3.2.8 Phase 2 is a 2-storey rear extension of coursed rubble stone construction. The south elevation includes a window opening on the first floor with stone dressings and a timber lintel. The window opening to the right on the ground floor also has stone dressings, while this detail is absent on the window opening to the left. This perhaps suggests that the left hand ground floor window is a later alteration. Internal details as well as a change in the character of the stonework below sill level suggests that this opening was formerly a door. All these windows have concrete sills and upvc double glazed windows.



Figure 12: South elevation of Phase 2

- 3.2.9 The ground floor includes a chimney breast centrally positioned along the north wall. The chimney visible in the roof void show that the upper part of the chimney was built with Fletton bricks and is therefore of late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The character of the roof timbers for the shallow pitched roof to the rear is also indicative of a late 19<sup>th</sup> or more likely a 20<sup>th</sup> century date. There is evidence for a fireplace along the east wall on the ground floor. The chimney



breast along the north wall therefore appears to have replaced this fireplace. Similarly, the roof structure to the rear has been rebuilt.



Figure 13: Window openings on the ground floor of Phase 2

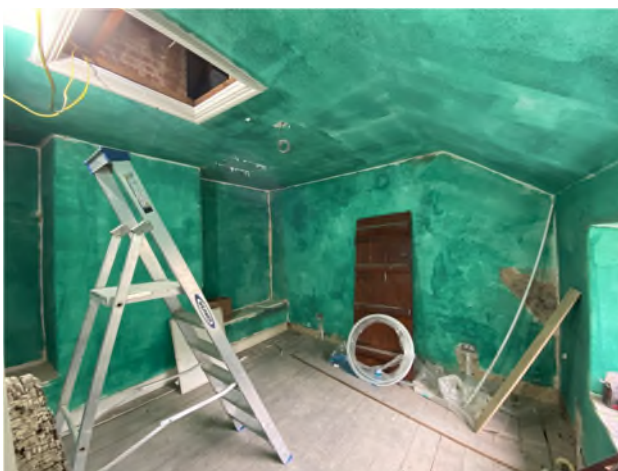


Figure 14: Chimney breast on the first floor of Phase 2



Figure 15: Fletton brick chimney and replacement roof structure in Phase 2

## **4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **4.1 Phase 1**

- 4.1.1 Phase 1 originated as a one-unit cottage with a single ground floor room over a stone lined cellar and probably with loft accommodation. The original eaves level on the front elevation is suggested by the height of the straight joint on the left hand side of the front of the house. This phase includes a chimney on the gable end wall. The main entrance is on the right hand side of the front elevation and includes stone dressings. The pattern of stone dressings associated with the sash window on the ground floor suggests an earlier smaller opening in this location. It is not clear if the alleyway is a secondary feature inserted into the ground floor of the original Phase 1 cottage. It is likely that the original stair was to one side of the chimney breast. The offsets on the right hand side of the existing chimney breast indicates that the original stair, probably a winder stair, was in the position of the existing spiral staircase.
- 4.1.2 The position of the truss on the first floor, which is offset towards the southern side of the first floor bedroom, suggests that Phase 1 may have formed part of a larger building that has been lost or incorporated into the adjacent properties. A cellar in a one-unit cottage is also quite unusual and further suggests that Phase 1 may originally been part of a larger cottage.
- 4.1.3 The style of the axial beam and the dimensions of the joists on the ground floor and the style of roof truss, which appears to be a type of cruck, suggests an early date, possibly late 16<sup>th</sup> century or early 17<sup>th</sup> century, for the Phase 1 cottage.
- 4.1.4 Phase 1 was remodelled, apparently in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This included the raising of the eaves level on the front elevation and associated changes to the roof structure. A sash window opening was created on the front elevation.

### **4.2 Phase 2**

- 4.2.1 Phase 2 is a rear extension which according to the listing was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This may be the case but there is limited diagnostic information in the surviving fabric to confirm this. The south elevation of Phase 2 includes two windows with stone dressing which suggest that these openings are original. The window opening to the left on the ground floor does not include stone dressings and may be a later alteration, possibly an opening for a door originally. The timber lintels appear to replacements and the windows are modern double glazed upvc replacements.
- 4.2.2 The interior includes a single room on each floor. The ground floor room was heated by a fireplace on the eastern gable end where there is a stack associated with No. 143. The roof structure and the chimney on the northern side of Phase 2 appears to be much later in date and may be related to Old Beams forming part of No. 143 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4.2.3 Phase 2 has been much altered and is considered to be of relatively low heritage significance.



## 5.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Proposals

5.1.1 The proposed scheme is for a replacement stair and for replacement windows to the rear.

### 5.2 Replacement stair

5.2.1 The existing stair is a modern metal spiral staircase of no heritage value (**figures 9 and 11**). Based on the character of the wooden balustrades on the landing and at the top of the cellar steps, the previous stair was likely of of c. mid-20<sup>th</sup> century date. The removal of the spiral staircase would not impact on the significance of the listed building.

5.2.2 The replacement stair would be a winder with straight flight staircase that would follow the line of the recessed section of wall to the right of the chimney breast. The proposed staircase would be timber and therefore more in keeping with the original stair. The straight flight with winder layout is also a traditional form. The use of square section spindles and newel post would be visually modest and sympathetic to the cottage character of the interior.

### 5.3 Replacement windows

5.3.1 It is proposed to replace four windows to the rear of the listed building. All four of the existing windows are upvc double glazed units and of no heritage value. The removal of these windows would not harm the character of significance of the listed building.



Figure 16: Dormer with a upvc double glazed window on the rear elevation of Phase 1



Figure 17: Upvc windows on the ground floor of the south elevation of Phase 2



Figure 18: Upvc window on the first floor of the south elevation of Phase 2

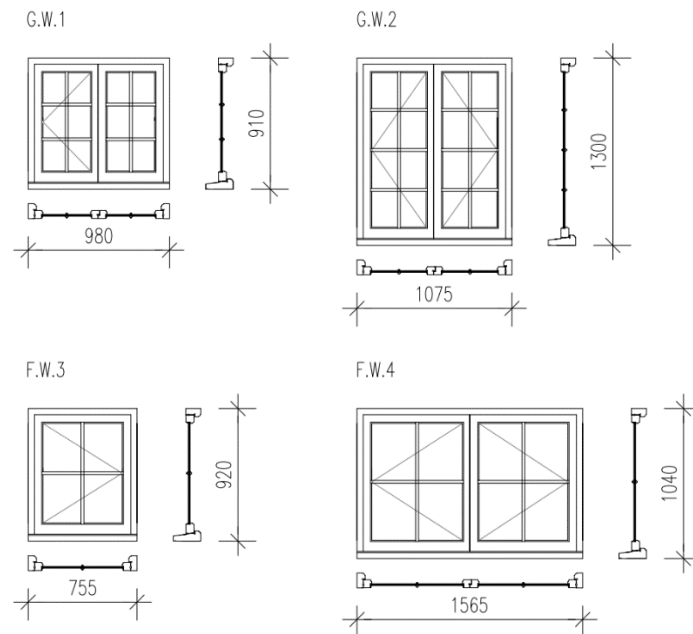


Figure 19: Profiles of the proposed replacement windows

5.3.2 The proposed replacement windows would be slim-profile double glazed units. These would be hardwood painted white to match the white painted finish of the historic windows on the

front elevation. The design of the proposed windows would include glazing bars for multi-paned lights which also make reference to the style of the historic windows on the front elevation. The proportions of the panes for each window reflect the size and proportions of each of the window openings. The glazing bars would be integral with an external putty and slander ovolo style mouldings internally.

- 5.3.3 The proposed replacement windows would enhance the external character of the listed building by replacing poorly detailed upvc double glazed units with timber windows with integral glazing bars with a white painted finish to match the style of historic windows on the front elevation of the listed building. This approach is in keeping with Historic England advice, as follows:

*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 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 listed building, which is the desired outcome under national policy.*

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 This assessment describes the historic development and interpretation/significance of the heritage asset and provides an assessment of the heritage impacts of the proposed development. As such, it is considered that this Heritage Statement meets the requirements set out in paragraph 200 of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information regarding the built heritage.
- 6.1.2 The conclusions of this assessment are that Old Beams is a one-unit cottage dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century which was remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The stone lined cellar, rubble stone wall construction, axial beam and joists and cruck-like roof truss on the first floor are important components of the Phase 1 cottage. The rear extension appears to have been constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but little remains legible from this earlier phase apart from the south elevation. The roof was rebuilt probably in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and all the windows have been replaced with modern double glazed units.
- 6.1.3 The proposed scheme involves the replacement of a modern spiral stair and upvc windows which do not contribute positively to the character and significance of the listed building. The replacement of these elements with a timber staircase and windows of a design that are sympathetic to the character of Old Beams is considered to represent an enhancement to the listed building.
- 6.1.4 As such, it is considered that the proposed scheme would sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage asset (para 203 of NPPF) and conserve the special architectural and historic interest of the building's fabric, appearance and character (WODC Local Plan policy EH11) in accordance with the NPPF and West Oxfordshire District Local Plan policies.

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