

Little Bec Heritage/Access Statement

Proposed Double Garage with Garden Store, Home Office and Spare Bedroom

Introduction

This Heritage Statement was commissioned by Mr and Mrs J. Gayner to support the applications for planning permission and listed building consent, required to replace the existing modern dilapidated garage at the side of the property, with a flat roof. The statement has been prepared in accordance with the advice and requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) paragraph 194, which requires applicants to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected. The heritage significance of the property has informed the extent and design of the works now presented for consideration by the Local Planning Authority.

This statement aims to identify the heritage significance of the building and site, then to demonstrate the impact of the proposal on that heritage significance. In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the level of detail in support of the application for listed building consent, is no more than is necessary to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset and for the local planning authority to reach an informed decision.

Listing

The cottage is listed as Grade II. The list entry was made in December 1960. House. Early C18. Flint and thatch. Symmetrical front (south) of 1 storey and attic, 3 above 4 windows (with outshot at the west end). ½ hipped roof, with eaves raised above the upper windows, hipped to the outshot. Walls of coursed squared knapped flint, with brick quoins, rubbed flat arches (with stone keys), plinth moulding and panel beneath the middle windows. Late C19 casements. C20 brick porch with hipped tile roof and ½-glazed door.

Location, Setting

The property lies within the boundary of the Amport and Monxton Conservation Area and is described in the Amport, Monxton & East Cholderton Conservation Areas Character Appraisal, produced by Test Valley Borough Council in 2004. The Amport and Monxton Conservation Area was designated in September 1980 and extended in 1981.

The appraisal describes Amport as an elongated village with most development following the Pillhill Brook and connecting roads styles.

A high proportion of buildings are listed or are of a local interest. The majority of older houses were originally small but many have been altered and extended or amalgamated. Older cottages are built to a long, low, linear floor plan and are generally timber-framed. Many have walls made of cob with steeply pitched, largely unpunctuated thatched roofs with low eaves. The majority of development has been built close to the road and one plot deep.

Little Bec contributes to the character of the conservation area because it is a typical example of a well preserved, timber framed, thatched cottage with brick & flint features at the front; and constructed in local vernacular cob. It is of a very modest size and located along the principal road winding through the villages in line with the Pillhill Brook.



Fig. 1 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Circa 1896

Little Bec cottage is located on the east side of Ampot, on the north side of Monxton Road, and is the last property before Monxton village. Monxton Road runs through the village of Ampot, roughly parallel to the Pillhill Brook, flowing approximately 40m to the south of the cottage. The cottage is located on rising ground approximately half a meter above road level and set behind a front garden. See Figure 1: Location Plan.

The cottage is positioned towards the front of the plot with a front garden set to lawn with a cob thatched garden wall on the east side and is enclosed by mature hedges to the Monxton Road, and the boundary to Bec Cottage. From the front, the cob-thatched wall separates the gravelled driveway, which has a detached garage or workshop. This has a flat roof, located in the line of the cottage. A recessed timber 5-bar gate at the rear provides entrance to the large rear garden. There are fields to the east side and rear, with a public footpath on the northern boundary. Over the west boundary is a new modern thatched cottage, Bec Cottage, which was part of Little Bec, (see planning history below). Behind Bec Cottage to the west are two modern-designed and recently constructed red brick houses, Copper Beaches and Flagons.

The original rear extension circa 1950 was single storey, which was further extended at first floor level in June 1951. It was noted as 'boxy and un-sympathetic, with a flat roof fitted to the thatched roof structure'. It was extended again 1990, with a further rear extension providing a new kitchen and utility space on the ground floor.

Recent Planning History

12/01586/FULLN Rear extension raising the existing rear extension roof and alterations to the existing modern rear extensions| Little Bec, Approved.

TVN.LB.00115/4 09/03/1994 Single storey rear extension to form kitchen and utility, alterations to bathroom, including provision of first floor window and demolition of chimney | Little Bec, Approved.

06/02187/FULLN | Erection of two storey dwelling with single detached garage with new access onto Monxton Road | Land Adjacent To Little Bec Monxton Road Amport, Approved.

TVN.05830 04/01/1990 Alterations and two-storey extension | Little Bec Sarson Amport Approved



Fig. 2 Location Plan (see scale bar)

Little Bec Description

Little Bec is a half-hipped, 1.5-story thatched cottage with 3 bays and a lesser thatched outshot store, which adds to the length of the front elevation. Below the thatch, the front elevation has brick quoins and finely squared knapped flintwork. Formerly two cottages, there are two sets of casement windows on each side of the modern entrance porch. The ground-floor windows have matching brick quoins with flat, rubbed arches and keystones, giving a formal impression. The three casement windows on the first floor are centred over the porch and symmetrically aligned with the windows on each side. When viewed from Monxton Road, the half-hipped thatched cottage of brick, flint, and quoins has a classical symmetrical quality. The cob-thatched garden wall separates the house from the side entrance drive. The modern rear extensions are hidden from the front and can be seen from the east.

The modern single-story garage workshop sits in the entrance drive adjacent to the cottage. (See elevations.) Formerly two cottages, Little Bec dates from the early 18th century and has a sympathetic 20th-century porch that must have replaced an older, simpler porch.

The internal structure is timber-framed, while the exterior shell is brick and flint in the front and cob with brick quoins on the other sides. The Ordinance Survey map 1896 (fig. 2) shows the cottage with the old porch further left than the current porch, and the west outshot. (See floor plans.) The timber casement windows with glazing bars centrally located are 19th-century style. There are two original chimney stacks, one on the west gable and one in the middle. The side and rear walls are rendered over a core of cob. (See elevations). Internally, the main cottage on the ground floor consists of a generous entrance hall with the sitting room to the

west and the living room to the east. To the north is the dining room. (See floor plans.) There do not appear to have been any substantial changes to the cottage in the twentieth century, other than possible replacement windows. The thatched roof is covered with combed wheat reed, commonly known as straw reed, instead of the local vernacular use of long straw. The lime-rendered cob walls can be seen above the thatch line in the eyebrows and in the west gable end.

Rear Extensions

The rear extension of the 1950s were seen as unsympathetic to the traditional thatched cottage with a boxy flat roof. The more recent planning history shows there have been some additions to this to improve the modern structure and soften its look. The more recent single-story rear/side entrance, approved in 2012, softened the boxy elevation. All these extensions combined are now an improvement, is well hidden from the front. At first floor level, the extension is connected by the 1950s linked flat roof to the 1990 extension, 1.5-story, roof with gabled ends. The extension north elevation has a more traditional/contemporary look with rendered walls under a plain tiled roof, which is subordinate in height to the existing thatched cottage. The east elevation can be seen from the east on Monxton Road. See fig 3.



Fig. 3 Eastern Approach Google Street View



Fig. 4 View with proposed scheme illustrated and outline of replacement tree

The Existing Plan layout

Internally, the ground floor consists of a large kitchen/family room facing the large rear garden. The utility room is on the west end, there is a newer approved 2012 side entrance, and WC is on the east side. On the first floor level, there are two bedrooms and two bathrooms, while in the existing cottage, the first floor has two main bedrooms and a playroom. (See floor plans.).

The existing garage is a modest flat-roofed single-story structure with a garage door to the right and a window on the left, as seen from the road. The woodwork of the window and barge boards shows signs of decay, and the white painted render is cracking in places. To the left of the garage is a five-bar gate that leads through to the rear garden, and to the right is a hedge and field.

The outshot on the west side of the cottage is un-used due to its delicate fabric. This potential storage area is kept open and free to allow for ventilation due to the rising dampness present in the floor and walls. The roof structure is also a delicate structure with exposed thatch roof, is close to the ground and needs to be set apart from uses that would posed a risk of fire or damage.

Proposed Double Garage with Garden Store, Home Office and Spare Bedroom

Pre-application 23/02706/PREAPN 28/11/2023

In the recent pre-application, a proposed two-story garage with rooms on the roof was submitted. This had a 45-degree roof pitch of plain clay tiles and was considered to be too tall because it was approximately 1 meter below the ridge height of the Little Bec, and the written advice suggested that it would not be seen as subservient to the host house and would be at odds within the street scene. As such, the proposal would have an adverse impact on the listed building and conservation area.

Proposed Impact

The proposed height of the 1.5-story garage with rooms in the roof has been significantly reduced from the proposals considered at pre-application. The general design follows the traditional form and character of rural timber-framed buildings found in the area. There are some Victorian farm buildings that are clad with either black or silvered oak weatherboard and have either natural slate or plain clay tile roofs. From the front view of the development, the proposed building is subservient to Little Bec in height and proportion. The existing garage, which is a 1.5-bay with limited openings, is unsuitable for general DIY maintenance tasks. There is a need for a double garage that meets basic standards to achieve a better combination of parking under cover with improved access for general DIY maintenance purposes. The proposed width of the garage, as shown, represents the average width of a typical double garage. Although the section of the cottage is a little less in width than the proposed garage, this is only noticeable from a bird's-eye view of the plans and not in the setting as seen from ground level or street level.

When viewed from the east, the impact is altered from the white extension to the proposed slate roof and oak weatherboarding of the building. See Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. The proposed

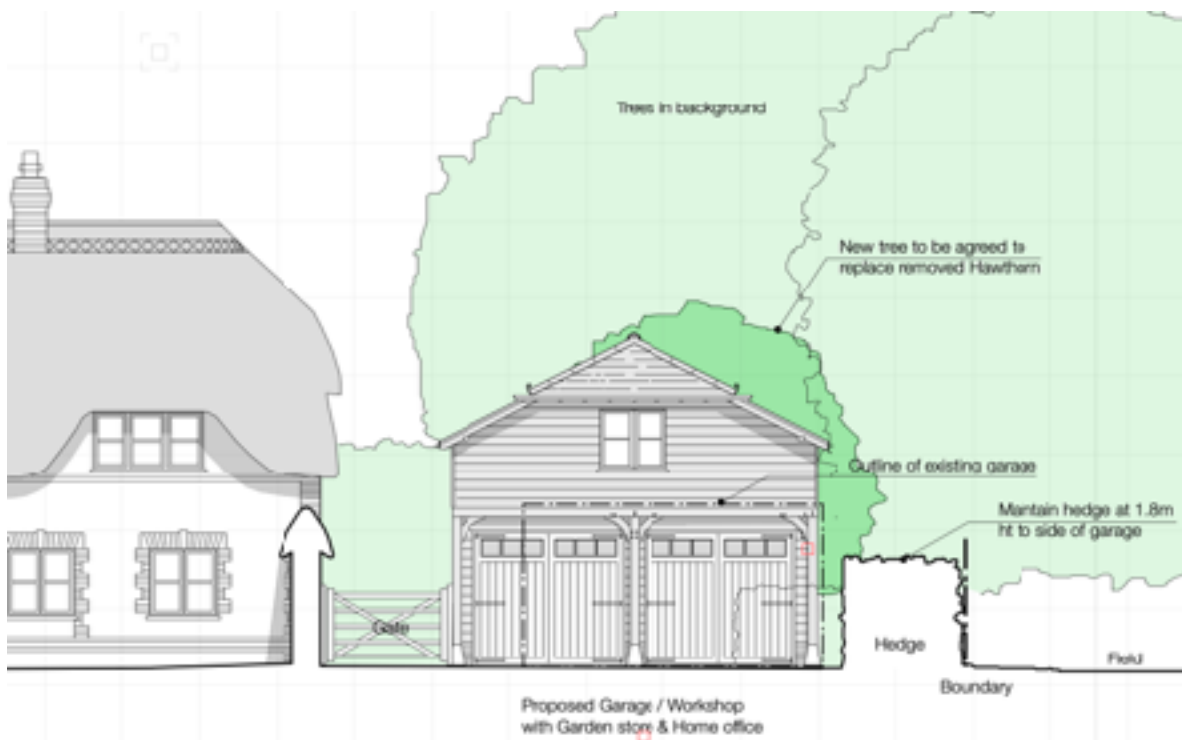


Fig. 5 South Elevation

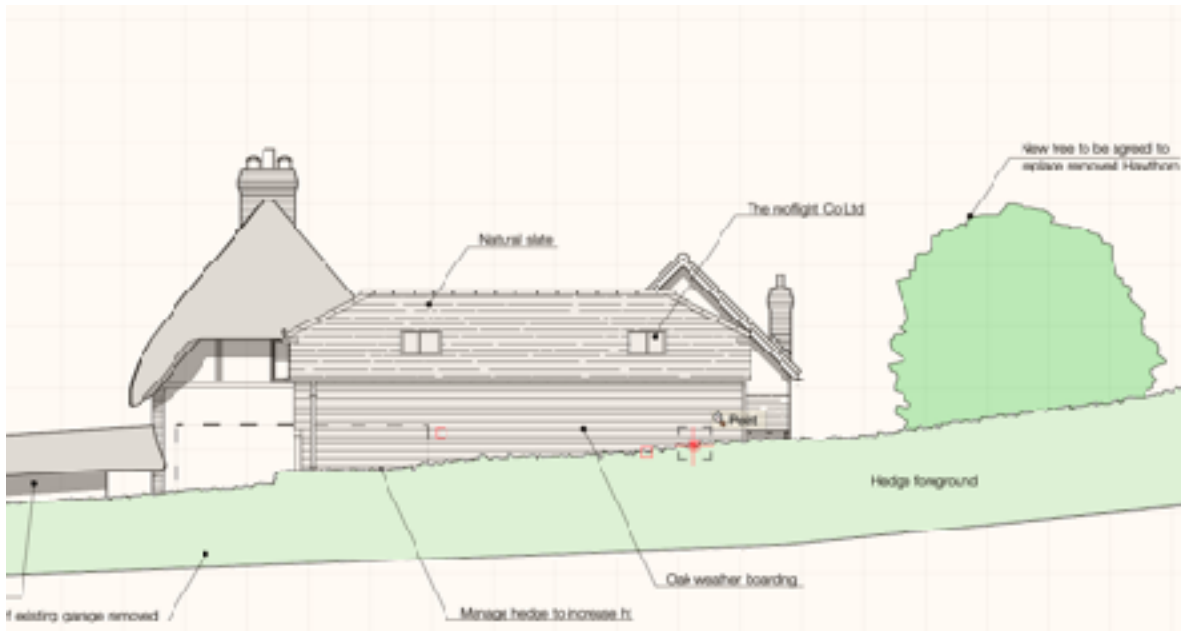


Fig. 6 East Elevation See fig. 4 illustration

building has been positioned back to avoid blocking the view of Little Bec from the eastern approach. (See Fig. 6 East Elevation.) This will blend into the landscape more naturally than the existing white modern element. The Google Street View represents a view of the setting approximately 70m away from the new building and will be further softened by the hedgerows and proposed planting of the scheme. The Pre-Application garage was significantly taller and the concern was that the property would be swamped by the taller garage proposed. This application addresses this concern. The proposed building is set further back and lower in height, will allow little Bec to be seen approaching from the east, past the new building and the front will be as it was unaffected by the subservient 1.5 storey garage.

This proposed scheme will not swamp the existing cottage in the setting from a public perspective or the from the Conservation Area perspective. The impact will from the east basically exchange the former view to the white extensions at the rear for the darker more natural looking rural & traditional design outline of the proposed 1.5 storey outbuilding instead.

The Family Need

The proposed garage with rooms on the roof represents the need to serve a large family of with children. Due to the much-needed modern living standards of today, the need for this proposal is to serve several requirements, including: a spare bedroom for the family and friends; an independent home office to make working from home possible; storage of garden machinery and tools and patio/garden furniture; and general maintenance for the general upkeep of the garden and the buildings.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Heritage Policy Implications

The proposal is consistent with planning policies affecting heritage assets. The relevant planning and conservation policies to be considered are contained within the local authority

development plan and government guidance for the conservation of heritage assets contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Local development Plan

7.2

Legislation instructs that applications should be determined in line with the Development Plan, or Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan is comprised of Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) plus the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013) and various Supplementary Planning Documents. Of these, the Local plan is most relevant.

Policy E9- Heritage says:

Development and/or works affecting a heritage asset will be permitted provided that:

- a) it would make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the significance of the heritage asset taking account of its character, appearance and setting; and
- b) the significance of the heritage asset has informed the proposal through an assessment proportionate to its importance.

[continued...]

The proposal positively sustains the conservation of the heritage asset because it makes no impact on the acknowledged interest of the original cottage. The proposed garage with rooms in the roof will partially sit into the lie of the land. It replaces the smaller modern dilapidated garage which is unsightly. The proposed building will be constructed in a traditional style with timber framing and oak weatherboarding and will sit harmoniously within the streetscene.

An understanding of the heritage significance has led to alterations in the proposals following pre-application advice. The assessment of significance has indicated that the interest lies in the cottage, and the 1.5 storey double garage has been designed in sympathy with the traditional cottage and does not obscure it. There is no harm to the defined heritage significance and therefore later parts of the policy are not relevant in this instance.

The proposal therefore complies with policy E9 and should be supported.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Of note is Chapter 16 of the NPPF (Revised July 2021). Of relevance are the following paragraphs:

Paragraph 197 states:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The proposed replacement of the outdated and dilapidated single storey garage with a double garage 1.5 storey ht, with room in the roof does not harm the heritage significance of the building for the reasons set out above. The new proposal increases the viability of the accommodation by enhancing the accommodation and maintenance of the property including the asset to serve as the heart of the household and family, while the existing house is not changed as a result of this proposal. The proposal represents good managed change and makes a positive contribution to the conservation of heritage assets.

Paragraph 199 requires that “great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation” when considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, and that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The proposal considers the longstanding visual character of the building together with the important use of vernacular materials and detailing in the building that follows local character.

There are few development projects which can genuinely result in no visible change. However, since conservation is not about eliminating change but managing it, the focus must be on ensuring that the change is sympathetic to the heritage interest and that there is no harm. This proposal involves change but not harmful change. The proposed extension is respectful of the acknowledged heritage interest and can be implemented in a harmonious manner. There is absolutely no erosion of heritage interest and the extension will sustain the relevance of the cottage as a viable and attractive family home long into the future.

The proposals accord with local and national planning policy in the historic environment and the applicants therefore respectfully request that the applications are supported.