

Heritage Statement Regarding Proposed Alterations and Improvement Works

The Old Rectory, Drinkstone

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The Old Rectory, Drinkstone

Client: Mr & Mrs Hill

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1.0 Introduction and Summary

1.1 A householder planning and listed building consent application is submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hill, residents of the Old Rectory in Drinkstone. This application is submitted as part of wider renovation, improvement, and extension works to the Old Rectory, and its outbuildings which is a Grade II* listed building. This application is focused primarily on converting the basement into habitable space and resolving the ongoing damp and water ingress issues which have been identified across the building.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (paragraph 194).

1.3 The Old Rectory was first listed, Grade II* on the 15th November 1954 (list no. 1032622). The list description reads as follows:

“Former rectory. Circa 1760 for Rev. Richard Moseley. Red brick with rusticated quoins and eaves cornice with modillions. Hipped slated roofs with internal chimneys of red brick. 2 storeys. 5-window main range; 3-window service range to left, lower and set-back. Small-pane sashes with flat arches of gauged brick; a Venetian window over the entrance lights the staircase hall. Prominent entrance doorway, approached by a flight of 5 steps; a pair of entrance doors with 3 fielded panels, an oblong fanlight with intersecting bars. Panelled pilasters, segmental pediment on massive enriched console brackets. Interior: 3 reception rooms have full-height panelling with large panels, and good fireplaces. Two rooms at 1st storey also fully panelled. Staircase with closely-spaced slender turned balusters, wreathed handrails and console brackets beneath each tread.”

1.4 Pre-application discussions relating to wider renovation works to this historic property were undertaken with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and Historic England between December 2022 and January 2023. This pre-application consultation included an assessment of a proposal to install a Type-C drained tanking system throughout several areas of the basement. The feedback received from Historic England in particular was that the use of tanking was not supported and further investigation on the source of water ingress and dampness was requested to be

undertaken. Following this advice, further investigation has been undertaken by Hutton + Rostron, Historic Building Surveyors, who have extensive experience assessing dampness and water ingress within historic buildings.

- 1.5 The recommendations of Hutton + Rostron have been developed into an updated proposal for the basement and an updated drainage system of the Old Rectory has been designed. This seeks permission from the Local Authority for a revised drainage system which will have the capacity to efficiently direct rainwater away from the house, proposes new, breathable wall and floor coverings, and new ventilation into the basement which will seek to address the damp and water ingress issues identified.
- 1.6 Further pre-application consultation has been undertaken with Historic England Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas, David Eve, between December 2023 and January 2024. Mr Eve confirmed that Historic England does not oppose the proposals.

2.0 Description of the Application Site and the Proposed Development

Description of the Application Site

- 2.1 The Old Rectory is in the village of Drinkstone in Mid Suffolk. It is a Grade II* listed mid-eighteenth-century former rectory which is now a house, with a mid-nineteenth-century service wing. There is a basement to the property below the eighteenth-century section of the house.
- 2.2 The Old Rectory sits within just under 20 acres of grounds and is surrounded by gardens and land on all sides without any immediate neighbouring properties. Beyond the grounds, to the north and northeast are two houses; Rectory Cottage and Brook House which are approximately 85 metres and 95 metres away. There are further houses to the northwest on the far side of The Street. Approximately 65 metres to the southwest is Bridge Farm and a group of further houses on either side of The Street and the All Saints Church beyond. To the east of the site is the recently created conservation lake and agricultural fields beyond.



Figure 2.1 - Aerial Image of the Site

- 2.3 The basement is formed of eight rooms/spaces shaped by solid brick masonry structural support walls and vaults that align with the upper Ground Floor of the main house. The basement floor is concrete in most areas and unmade ground cover in a

small storage area.

- 2.4 The Old Rectory is a Grade II* listed building. The listing identifies features on the building such as “*rusticated quoins*” and “*eaves cornice with modillions.*”
- 2.5 Other heritage assets near the application site are;
- 2.5.1 Abbots Lodge, Grade II – 105 metres to the southeast.
 - 2.5.2 The Old Post Office and Whitegate cottage, Grade II – 160 metres to the northwest.
 - 2.5.3 The Blacksmith’s Cottage, Grade II – 162 metres to the northwest.
 - 2.5.4 Street Farmhouse, Grade II – 165 metres to the northwest
 - 2.5.5 Church of All Saints, Grade II* - 175 metres to the south

Planning History

- 2.6 The relevant planning history for The Old Rectory is as follows:
- 1694/16, 1693/16:** Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications for the erection of a single-storey rear extension including removal of a section of the external wall of the existing building to connect extension –Granted June 2016
- 1901/16:** Partial internal fit out to basement including tanking of walls, to create games room – Granted September 2016
- DC/20/03495:** Full Planning Application - Creation of conservation lake – Granted October 2020
- DC/23/01136 + DC/23/01137** Householder Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications for the Erection of extension to main house; Erection of an outbuilding containing a swimming pool and gym, and cart lodge (following demolition of existing swimming pool and building). – Granted 10th August 2023.
- DC/23/04194:** Householder Planning Permission Conversion of barn/outbuilding to studio/home office – Granted February 2024
- 2.7 Planning permission 1901/16 granted permission to fit out of the basement with tanking to create a habitable space. Work to install this tanking system has been partially undertaken and the northwest room of the basement has a tanking system in place.

- 2.8 Planning and listed building consent DC/23/01136 + DC/23/01137 granted permission for an extension to the house and an outbuilding as well as improvement works to the house, which included opening up the basement windows, creating a new entrance to the cellar and a new internal stair layout.

Proposed Development

- 2.9 This application seeks to continue the improvement works to the building which were approved under applications DC/23/01136 + DC/23/01137. This application proposes changes to the property which seek to resolve the water ingress and damp issues identified as well as improvement works to the basement which will make this a habitable space.

- 2.10 The proposed changes are shown on the submitted plans and are listed in the Design Statement prepared by Soup Architects and submitted with this application. These are briefly listed as follows;

- Creation of a new drainage system across the property including installing downpipes and gutters with sufficient capacity, French Drains to the east, and south elevations with gullies discharging to new soakaways around the property.
- Alterations to the light wells to create effective drainage channels and chutes to allow water to escape.
- Installation of a breathable limecrete floor with UFH and tile finish to sections of the basement.
- Removal of existing drylining, paint, render/tanking slurry in the basement and areas of exposed brickwork to be limewashed or plastered with lime-based render.
- Installation of a mechanical ventilation system in the basement.
- Removal of partition walls in the basement and support provided by new joists to existing downstand beams.
- Installation of new windows to match the existing.
- Installation of WC and partitions to create stores.

- 2.11 The changes detailed seek to resolve the damp issues by addressing the areas

identified as causing water ingress externally, removing previously applied render and tanking which is trapping moisture in the building fabric, and increasing passive and mechanical ventilation around the basement. It is hoped this will result in the basement becoming a suitable environment to be used as a living space.

- 2.12 The changes proposed will benefit the building by taking a holistic approach to remedy the damp issues which are causing damage to the building fabric. The materials proposed to be used are traditional and breathable materials which will aesthetically benefit the building as well as resolve the underlying moisture problems. The proposals have been designed to retain and protect the building, while resolving the identified defects, and providing a viable, long-term use for the property basement which justifies the level of improvement work required.
- 2.13 The alterations to the building fabric are minor and mostly limited to removing modern supports and walls in the southeast rooms of the basement. These changes will revert this section of the building to a more uniform layout which is likely true to its original layout. The proposed changes to the central vaulted room will utilise this section of the basement with a new use.

3.0 Planning Policy

- 3.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in considering applications for development which affect a heritage asset or its setting, Local Planning Authorities shall have special regard for the desirability of preserving the building or its setting (section 66.1).
- 3.2 Chapter 16 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) puts great emphasis on conserving the historic environment. For proposals affecting heritage assets, Paragraph 196 a) states that account should be taken for the *“desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.”* This proposal specifically seeks to create a viable, long-term use for the basement of the Old Rectory, which will help to ensure its short-term repair work which will enable its long-term conservation.
- 3.3 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF requires an applicant to *“describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”*. The site’s significance has been described earlier in this report. It is a Grade II* listed building. This application seeks to address problems within the building fabric and primarily those that impact the basement area. Paragraph 200 goes on to state that an *“appropriate desk-based assessment”* should be provided. Given this application seeks to remedy existing issues with the building, and does not propose significant changes to the building, this assessment meets this requirement.
- 3.4 Paragraph 212 states that proposals which preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the heritage assets, should be treated favourably. This application seeks to remove the existing tanking slurry and covering materials to expose the original brickwork of the Old Rectory basement which will better reveal the historic materials.
- 3.5 Paragraph 209 states *“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”* and paragraph 205 advises that *“when considering the impact on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation”*. Paragraph 206 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets.

- 3.6 Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Policy LP19 echoes the aims of the NPPF, seeking to protect and enhance historic buildings such as the Old Rectory.
- 3.7 The proposed works have been developed with the intention of avoiding harm to the significance of this important listed building. The proposed drainage plans seek to address damp issues which are currently damaging the building fabric. The proposed methods of damp remediation do not involve tanking which would conceal the building fabric, and have kept changes to the historic building to a minimum. Any new covering proposed will use lime wash paint or lime-based plaster.
- 3.8 This application seeks to address the cause of water ingress and dampness into the property, rather than responding to the dampness which has already entered the property. This method of addressing these issues which will provide a long-term solution to an issue which would otherwise continue to cause issues to this historic property.
- 3.9 This proposal has been put forward seeking to follow the advice of both local heritage officers and Historic England building inspectors, to enhance and protect the building.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The Old Rectory is a Grade II* listed building, as such it is a particularly important building of more than special interest.
- 4.2 This application seeks planning and listed building consent for a range of changes to The Old Rectory which seek to address and resolve ongoing damp and water ingress issues, as well as underlying ventilation issues which are causing damage to the fabric of this historic building and make the basement unusable.
- 4.3 The proposed changes seek to address the identified damp issues holistically by solving identified problems with the existing drainage system, removing previous tanking and render which are trapping moisture, as well as creating a new ventilation system. Exposed brickwork will be painted with breathable limewash, and if areas need to be plastered, this will be with a traditional, breathable limewash render. This will create a suitable living environment for the basement to be used as a habitable room. This work will benefit the property by resolving longstanding damp and water ingress issues and will provide a long-term use for the basement which will ensure it is maintained in the long term.
- 4.4 In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, this statement has assessed the proposed changes in accordance with the significance of this heritage asset. This application seeks to remedy an ongoing issue with the building while providing the basement with a viable use consistent with its conservation.
- 4.5 The proposals will have a positive impact on the building. There will be no wider impact on the setting of the property.