

# JONES CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

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## **Heritage Statement (including design and access statement) for Proposed Alterations to Existing Bell Tower**

**at**

**The Church of St James The Great, Blakedown, Kidderminster**

February 2024

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION.

### The Statement.

This statement has been prepared by Jones Chartered Architects to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent in connection with alterations to the Church of St James The Great in Blakedown, Kidderminster. The statement describes the existing site and existing building fabric giving an assessment of the impact of the proposed works with specific consideration to the special character and historic significance.

### The Application Site.

The settlement of Blakedown is located approximately 3 miles to the east of Kidderminster. The Church is located just off the A456 Birmingham Road and dates from the 1860's.

## 2. LOCATION.

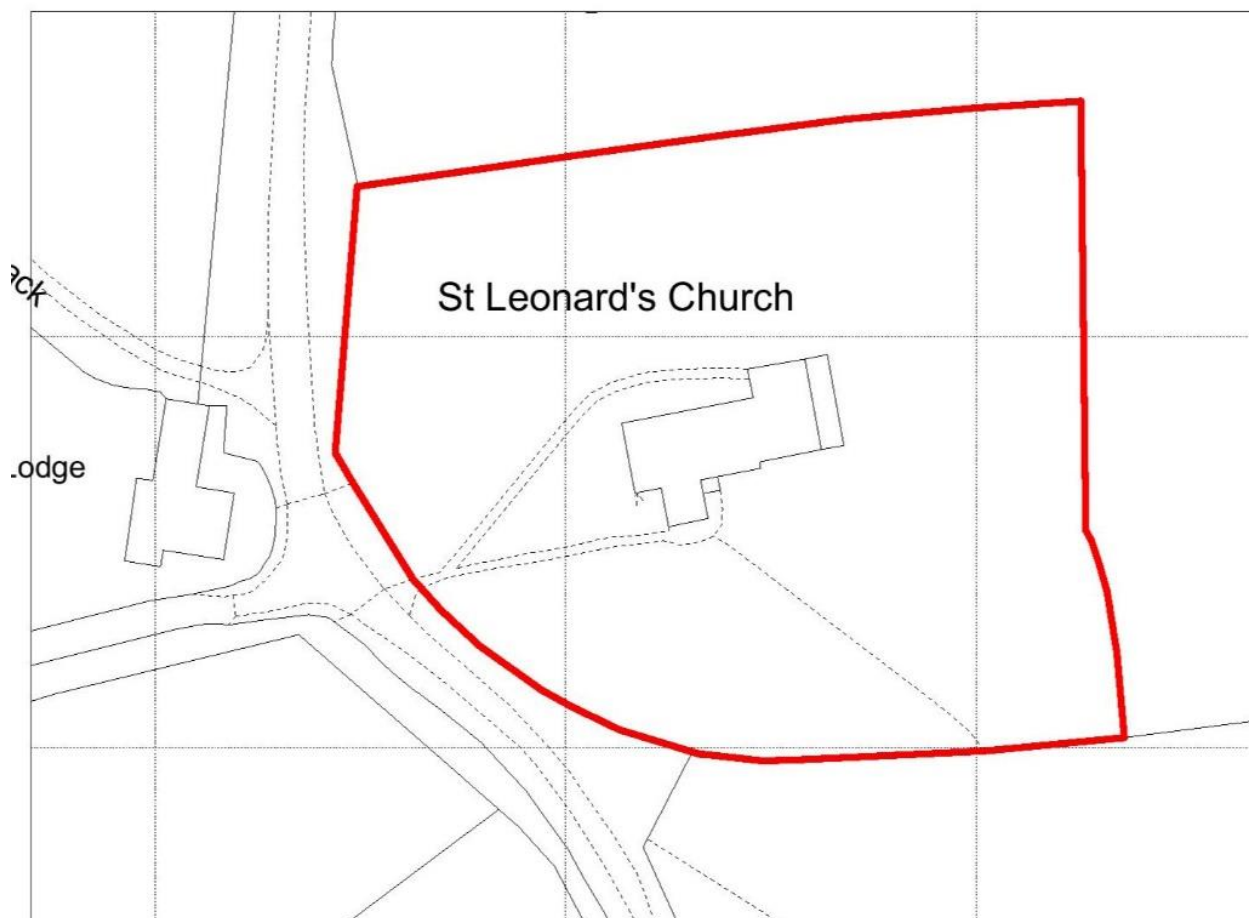


Fig 1. Location plan (not to scale).

### 3. SITE STATUS AND DESCRIPTION

The application building is Grade II\* listed.

Listing Details:

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II*
List Entry Number:	1296885
Date first listed:	28-Mar-1987
Statutory Address 1:	CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT, BIRMINGHAM ROAD

Listing Text:

*“CHURCHILL & BLAKEDOWN CP BIRMINGHAM ROAD (south side) SO 87 NE Blakedown 7/73 Church of St James the Great - II Parish church. 1866, by G E Street, extended 1905. Sandstone rubble with machine tile roof. Nave, chancel and north aisle of 1905. Nave: three bays with two cinquefoiled light window to left, a trefoiled lancet, gabled porch to right. West window of three cinquefoiled lights under 2-centred head below timber bellcote with shingled pyramidal roof. Chancel: one trefoiled lancet; east window of three cinquefoiled lights. Aisle: two windows of two pointed lights, to left end a window of two cinquefoiled lights under square head. Interior: three-bay arcade to aisle has two Tudor arches and a smaller 2-centred arch to west. Bellcote supported by large arch-braced collar truss. Fittings: almost all are early C20. (BoE, p 93).”*

*Listing NGR: SO8807678474*

#### **4. ASSESSMENT OF ASSETS AND SIGNIFICANCE.**

In order to assess the impact of the proposals on the heritage assets it is first necessary to establish their significance.

The four principal parameters of value to be considered are as follows:

- **Evidential value.** This is derived from the potential of the place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- **Historical value.** This is derived from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
- **Aesthetic value.** This is derived from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- **Communal value.** This is derived from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

##### **Evidential value.**

Evidential value ‘...derives from the physical remains or genetic lines that have been inherited from the past. The ability to understand and interpret the evidence tends to be diminished in proportion to the extent of its removal or replacement.’ (English Heritage 2008, Para 38,p28).

The application site has some evidential value due to the surviving Victorian fabric, although this is somewhat diminished by the alteration made in 1905 and subsequent renovations.

##### **Historical value.**

‘Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative’ (English Heritage 2008, Para 39, p28).

The application site has significant local historical value.

##### **Aesthetic value.**

‘Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place’ (English Heritage 2008, Para 46, p30). Aesthetic value might be the result of intended design, or it may have come about more or less fortuitously as a result of the evolution of a place over time.

The application site has aesthetic value as a result of the architectural qualities of the existing building.

##### **Communal value.**

Communal value ‘Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory’ and is therefore perhaps the most subjective of the four values discussed here (English Heritage 2008, Para 54, p31).

The application site has communal value for reasons by virtue of the role the parish church plays within the settlement.

## 5. THE EXISTING CONDITION.

The existing Bell Tower is of timber framed structure and is composed of three sections. The upper spire section has a four sided timber boarded roof above a central part-louvred bell chamber. The lower section is a steep pitched tiled hipped roof arrangement which straddles the main Nave roof (also pitched and tiled).

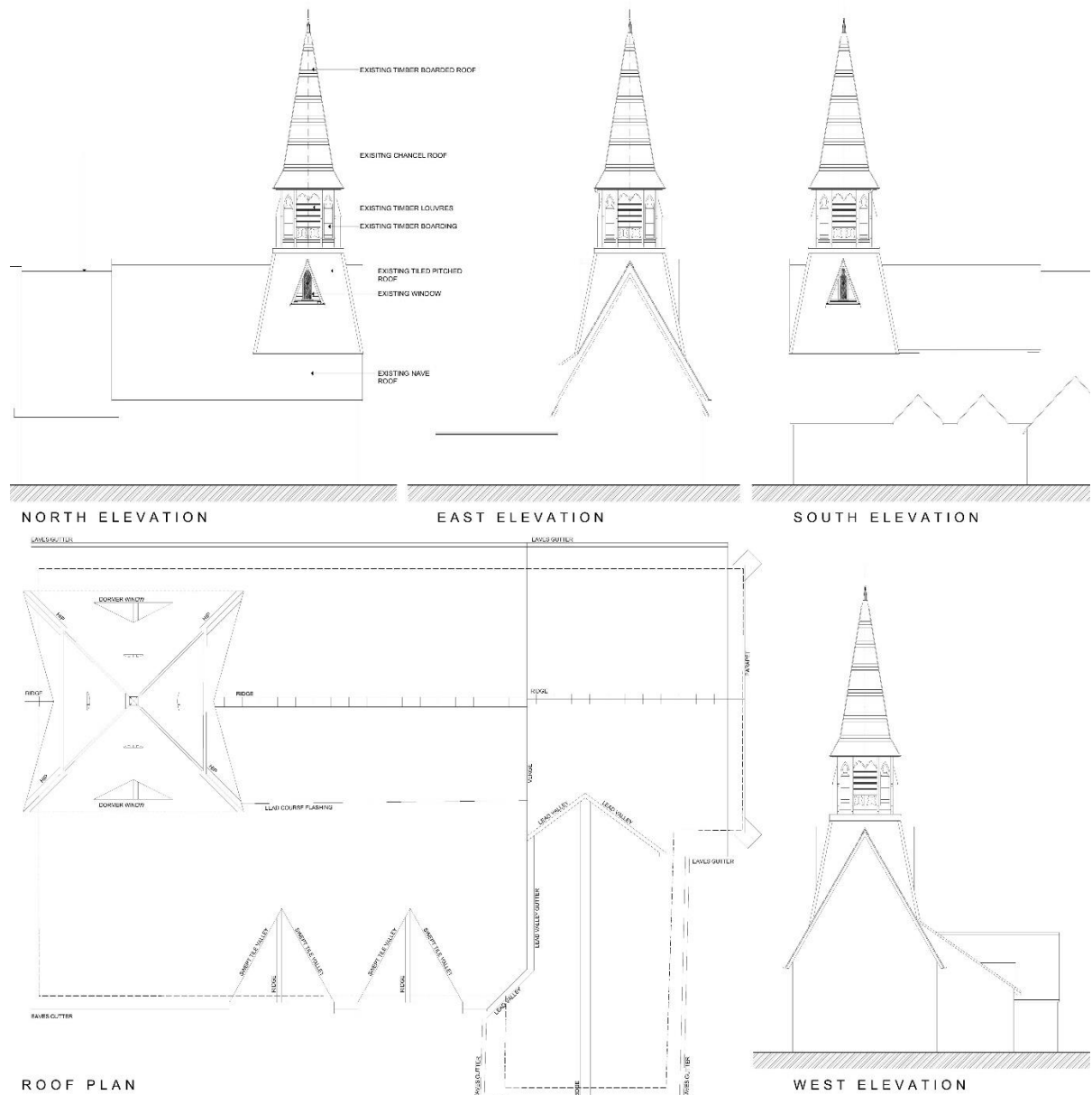


Fig 2. Extract from application drawing showing the general arrangement of the existing church roofs (NTS).

The four bonnet hips to the lower section of the tower, although original, have been problematic for many years and have given rise to water and damp ingress into the church interior. During recent repair works to the timber bell chamber and spire, the church roofs were inspected. A number of were noted including poor lapping of the tile courses and in particular at the abutment with the clay bonnet hips to the lower section of the tower. Due to the steep pitch of the roofs the cutting-in of the tiles has resulted in a number of straight un-bonded joints and little or no overlap between the hip tiles and the plain tiles. This detail has resulted in tracking water ingress.



*Fig 3. Photographs showing existing bonnet hip detail to lower section of Bell Tower.*



*Fig 4. Photograph showing existing Bell Tower, Nave and Chancel roofs.*



*Fig 5. Photograph showing existing bonnet hip detail and top cover flashing.*

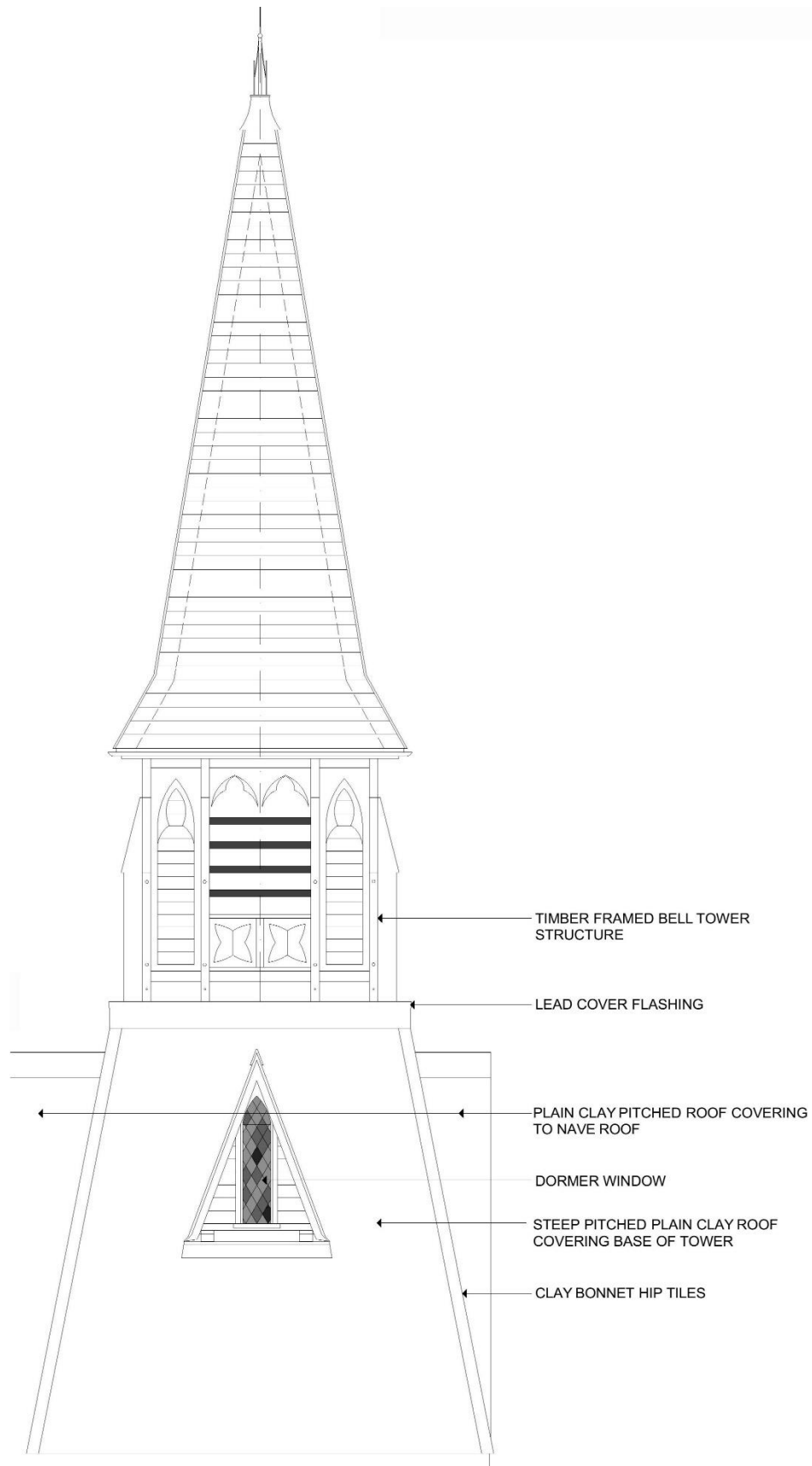


Fig 6. Extract from application drawing showing the existing Bell Tower (NTS).



## 6. THE PROPOSED WORKS.

It is proposed to remove the clay tiles from the lower section of the Bell Tower along with the bonnet hip tiles. The timber sub structure will be inspected and assessed for damage or decay and appropriate repairs will be affected if necessary.

The roof covering will be renewed in tiles to match existing and incorporating a breathable (Tyvek or similar) membrane.

The hip detail will be amended to a lead-roll hip with secret gutter/soaker arrangement. The amended detail will allow water to drain freely and achieve a better lap with the pitched roof tiles. The proposed arrangement will have a modest effect on the appearance of the Bell Tower but will be in no way detrimental.

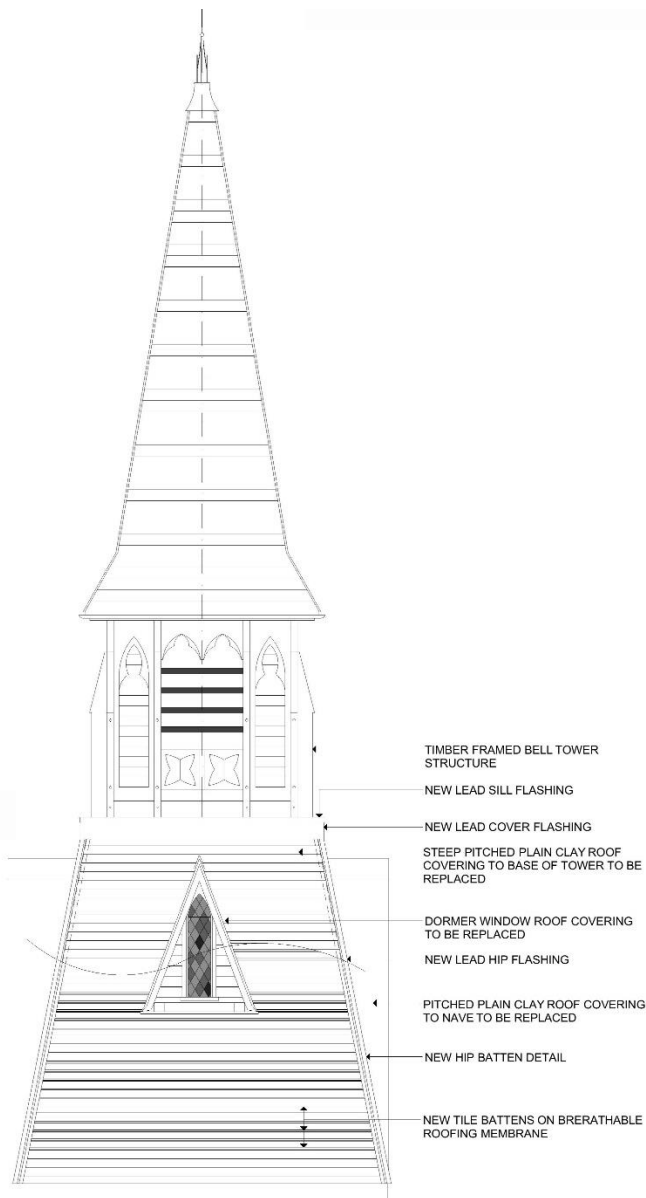


Fig 7. Extract from application drawing showing the proposed Bell Tower (NTS).



Fig 8. Photograph to illustrate the proposed lead-roll hip detail.

It is also proposed to renew the roof covering to the Chancel and Nave roofs during the same programme of works. This work will be carried out on a like-for-like basis, replacing the existing tiles with new tiles sourced from Dreadnought and to match the existing tiles.

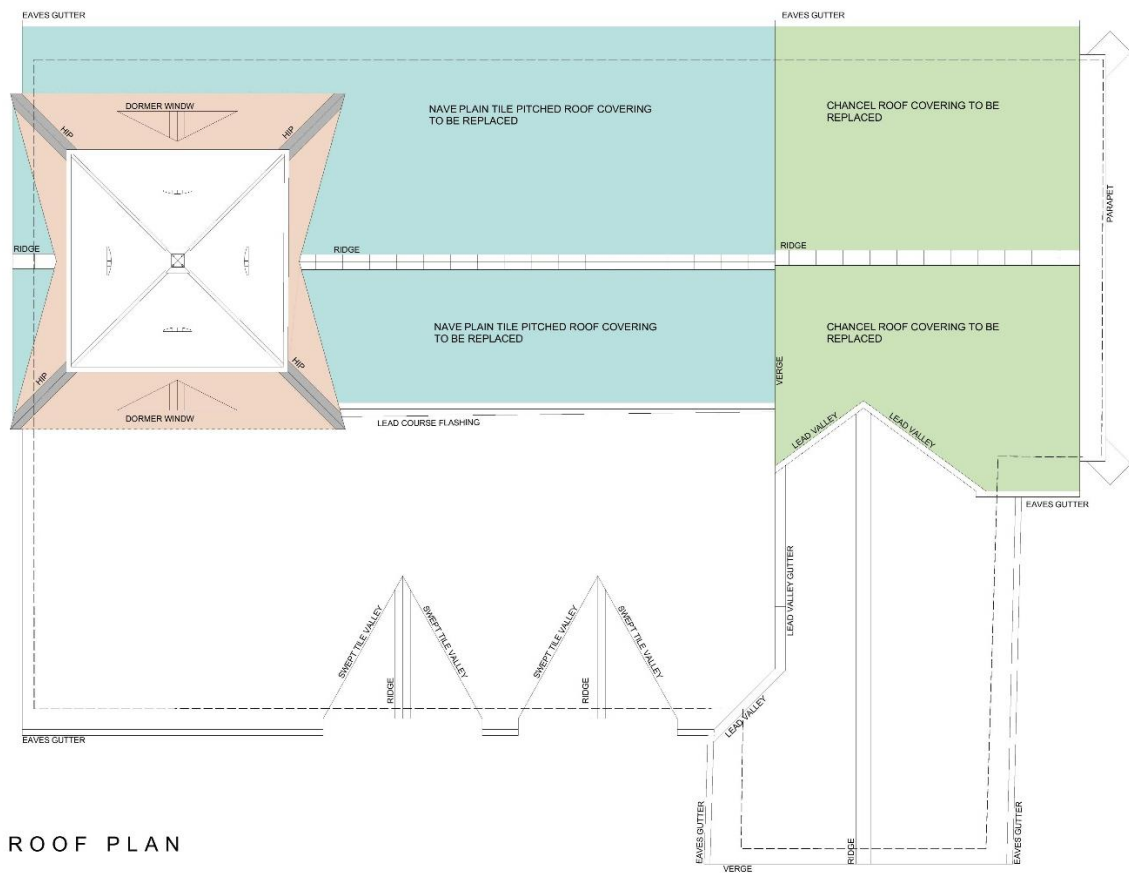


Fig 9. Extract from application drawing showing the proposed roof works (NTS).

## **7. THE IMPACT ON THE ASSET.**

The impact of the proposed works can be considered against the Heritage England values criteria as follows:

**Evidential value.** The proposed works will not alter the size, shape or significantly affect the appearance of the application site/building. It can therefore be concluded that the proposals will not result in any significant impact evidential terms.

**Historical value.** The proposals will not result in the significant loss or alteration to any historic building fabric or other material. The proposals will not result in any reduction in the historical value of the application site/building.

**Aesthetic value.** The application seeks only for minor external alteration to the building fabric and as such there will be no significant impact on the character or aesthetic value of the application site/building. In particular, the important role of the building within in the street scene will not be affected by the proposals.

**Communal value.** The proposals will not impact on the communal value of the locally listed heritage asset. The proposal will in fact secure the future of the building by increasing its functional and economic value.

## **8. DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

The proposed works will not alter access arrangements to the building.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

It can be concluded that the works proposed under this application will not have any significant detrimental impact on the identified listed heritage asset.