The Old Forge

Mendlesham Road

Brockford

Stowmarket

IP14 5NU

Proposed Repairs to Brick Plinth

V0.1

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About The Property

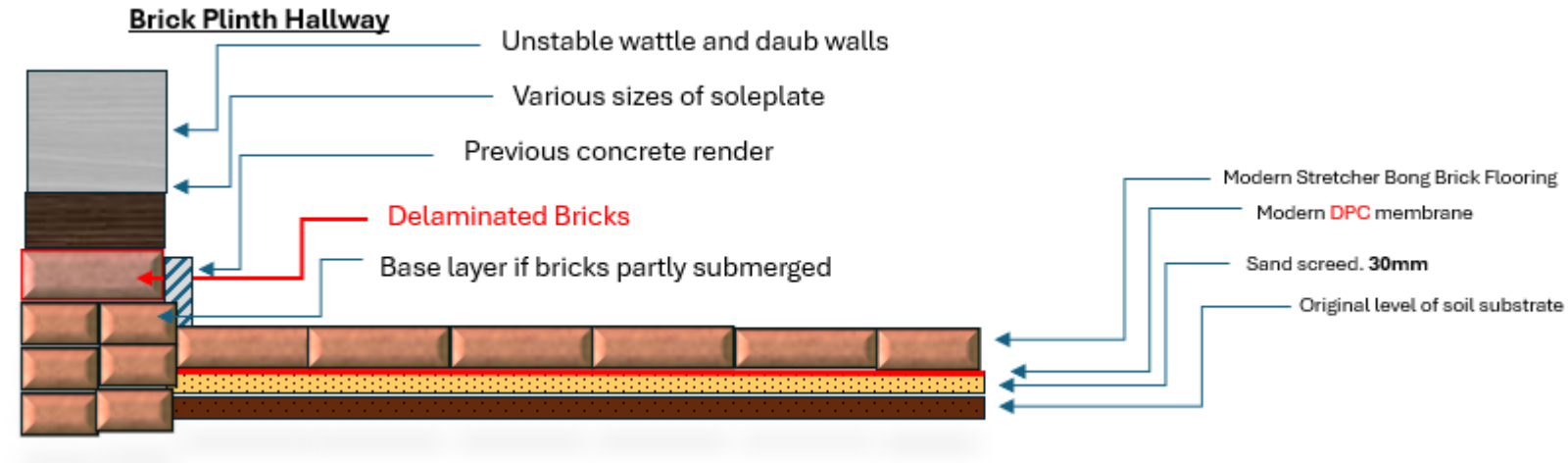
The property is a Grade II listed House that lies to the north end of Mendlesham Road, and it was latterly 3 cottages of early 16th Century. The property is timber framed and rendered with a thatched roof. 2 cells which are of high quality with the service end to north lost. The property consists of 2 storeys and attic which has been converted into 3 attic bedrooms which is accessed by 3 stairways, one on the East side of the house which leads up from the ground floor dining room and two which lead up to two attic bedrooms from the first-floor landing. There is an underbuilt jetty to east, facing the Ipswich-Norwich Road. 3 windows of mid C20 with 3-light casements with horizontal glazing bars. There are 2 old plank doors, with mid C20 French windows to right. One eyebrow dormer. Main stack has rebuilt axial shaft. A further stack of narrow red brick against north gable end. Small mid C20 porch on south gable end. To rear (west), a 2-storey lean-to of rendered clay lump under a slated roof. The interior consists of a Hall and parlour which have fine ceilings and fully moulded floor beams with a complex series of rolls and hollows, joists with 2 hollow mouldings and cut-back stops. The hall is now divided into 2 rooms. Evidence for service doorways can be seen at the north gable end. Intact heavy studding with no visible bracing; close studding to east on upper floor; evidence for many original windows: these probably had square mullions. Ground floor studs to east pushed forward to under build jetty, perhaps in C17. Truss over hall chamber has shallow braces and carries a plain crown-post with 2-way bracing to the collar purlin and cranked down braces to the tie beam. Remainder of crown-post roof intact. Stack is a later addition, probably preceded by a timber flue or smoke bay as the timbers in the narrow bay which the stack occupies are smoke stained. C17 upper ceilings

The Old Forge is a heritage asset, the extent of the fabric that contributes to its heritage significance are the features that form the main part of the 16th Century dwelling at the front of the property including the thatched roof. The rear of the property fronts onto the Mendlesham road and faces west overlooking farmland. The front of the property looks across laid lawns and then established trees and shrubs which camouflage the river Dove and then the main A140 Norwich to Ipswich Road.

This has been prepared to discharge a condition in the Listed Building Consent Application DC/23/05940 which states that :

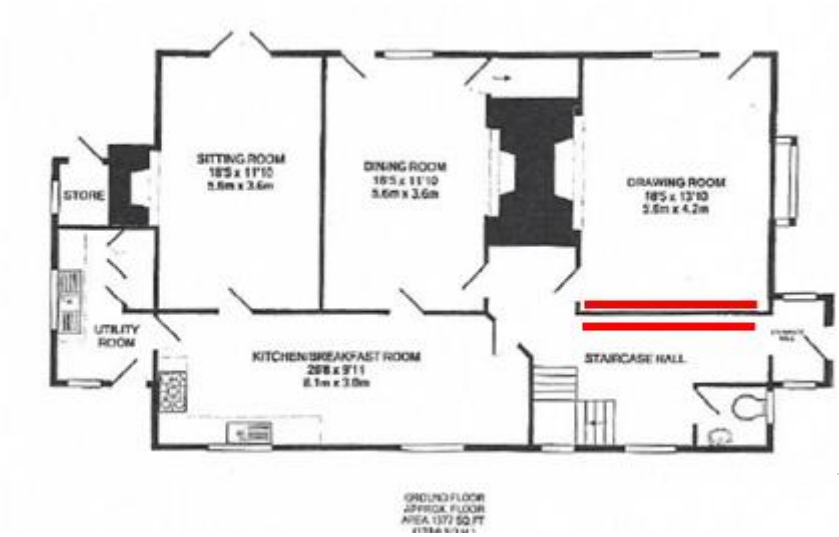
Prior to commencement of works to the repair the brick plinth, a report detailing the extent of the works required to the plinth, alongside the proposed new bricks to make up the shortfall should be submitted to, and agreed with the Local Planning Authority

Proposed Repairs



Proposed Repair

To maintain the stability of sections of soleplate and to reduce impacts to the unstable wattle and daub walls above, it is proposed to completely replace the top layer of bricks in each section with handmade Bulmer bricks (2.5 inches) as per the red line below. The plan is to carefully chisel out and remove 3 bricks at a time and replace and point with lime mortar along the length of the plinth. The bricks at the lower level will be repointed in situ. The plinth will then be rendered with Lime which will protect the bricks from any damage as the area is subject to heavy use.



Listed Building Consent Recommendation

From: Kathleen Fisher <Kathleen.Fisher@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2023 4:17 PM
Subject: RE: DC/23/05467- LBC for The Old Forge, Mendlesham Road IP14 5NU - onsite meeting 18th December 2023 - actions

Thanks for taking the time to meet on site yesterday. As discussed on site, I wanted to clarify remedial steps, and moving forward your current application.

Firstly, after advice was given to remove the concrete from the internal elevations of the plinth, it appears that the plinth has been damaged by the concrete render, and many of the bricks are delaminated due to water damage. Many of these will likely need to be carefully removed and replaced. The plinth is a mix of modern brickwork in places with some historic brickwork, although now severely damaged. It seems likely that much of the brick plinth will need to be repaired. There is also some unusual air bricks on one elevation, which will need further consideration, as discussed.

It appears that concrete screed has been laid throughout the historic core of the property and extended up and over the plinth. This concrete is now cracked due to water damage and needs to be removed. Some of the screed has flaked away and shows a likely historic brick floor below the surface. This flooring should be retained where possible throughout the works.

Regarding suitable steps to secure the future of the building, I would recommend that **the concrete screed is not replaced 'like-for-like'.** As a timber-framed building, much of its historic fabric is breathable. This means that it deals with moisture passively, allowing it to freely move and escape the building. The concrete screed has significantly reduced this ability, meaning that flood water has become trapped in the fabric of the building, and may do again should any future flooding occur. I would recommend that a breathable floor substrate is utilised, such as limecrete. This should allow for any future flood water to escape the building through the floor and reduce the damaging impacts of the floodwater in the building in the future.

Regarding the current application, Nic had produced an appropriate repair for the soleplate, taking on board my comments about retaining as much as possible from the former entranceway (including the uneven worn top layer, which shows years of feet stepping over the threshold). I am content that this work is considered appropriate, and that steps have been taken to mitigate or avoid harm to the significance of the building. This detail can be resubmitted with any future applications.

Therefore, I suggest that the current application ….. cover all the works required to rectify the damage, including the replacement of the screed flooring and repairs to the brickwork in the plinth. This way, all the works can be approved in one application, and not require an additional application to run concurrently with this one, and allows you more time to get all the documents required ready over the Christmas break, including amending the plans to allow for a breathable floor substrate.

If you could let me know if it is your intention to withdraw the application by Friday 5th January it would be much appreciated.

Kathleen Fisher , Heritage Officer

The duty imposed by s.16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, including its setting. To accord with the requirements of the NPPF, a finding of harm, even less than substantial harm, to the significance of a listed building is a consideration to which the decision-maker must give "considerable importance and weight".

Following flooding damage that occurred in October 2023, the previous modern floor covering became damaged, and were removed to allow for drying of the affected areas. At this point, it was revealed that the floor below had been levelled with a concrete based screed, which was cracked and damp. The cracks in the screed showed that just below was a likely intact historic brick floor. The screed also continued up and over the brick plinth. At our request, the concrete was removed by hand, to allow the bricks below to dry effectively. We recommended that to mitigate harm from future flooding, the flooring should be replaced with a breathable substrate, that would allow for moisture to escape the flooring faster, and hopefully reduce the harm that future flooding presents to the building.

As per this advice, all the concrete screed in the historic core of the building was removed by hand, and it is proposed to now lift the existing bricks to allow for 'Glapor', aerated glass to be installed below. The bricks will be stored on site, and then relayed back in their original form above the insulation, reinstating this feature of the building. The bricks will then be repointed and secured using a lime mortar. This should allow for better moisture movement within the flooring, hopefully reducing future harm to the structure that may occur from any flooding. Two options were offered, to either leave the bricks exposed as the final finish, or to lay a limecrete covering over the top, but the former has been agreed and the bricks will remain exposed.

As such, this proposal reflects the previous advice, and thus the proposal represents a Heritage benefit to the building, by means of removing inappropriate modern materials in favour of breathable, traditional techniques and revealing and reinstating a historic floor finish.

CONCLUSION
The proposal would not result in any demonstrable harm to any matter of planning substance. There would be no detrimental effect on the significance of the listed building. It therefore accords with relevant development plan policies and national planning guidance. The proposal is acceptable.

Case Officer Signature: Kathleen Fisher Date: 23.02.2024

Section 3 for the approval stated:

Prior to commencement of works to the repair the brick plinth, a report detailing the extent of the works required to the plinth, alongside the proposed new bricks to make up the shortfall should be submitted to, and agreed with the Local Planning Authority

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