

# Planning and Heritage Statement

19 Bond Street, Stowmarket, IP14 1HR

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Mr & Mrs Pattle

## Application

Addition of external insulation to rear and gable walls



## Existing building

The original building was built in the mid-nineteenth century as a pair of small semi-detached houses, built in Suffolk white brick with a Welsh slate roof. This was one of the first buildings on New Bond Street, a new road laid out in the late 1860s. The rest of the street was built out over a period extending to the 1890s, generally in the form of terraced blocks of four houses mostly in red brick.

Early in the twentieth century 17 and 19 Bond Street were combined to create a single dwelling with the building being significantly re-ordered both internally and externally. The work included replacing and reshaping windows in casement form with decorative

leaded lights, relocation of external doors including addition of a front doorcase, internal refitting with new doors and frames with generous moulded architraves with corner blocks, skirtings, picture rails and ceiling cornices and other internal fittings all with a distinctive Edwardian feel. The two octagonal ground floor windows in the north gable wall were part of this early C20th makeover. An effect of these alterations was to change the character of the building from its original urban vernacular form into one that can be considered distinctly more polite.

In the intervening period up to the present day the building has undergone further changes; a change of use to administrative offices serving the W A Turner pie and sausage factory which was developed on land to the rear, separation from the factory when that was bought by Suffolk County Council to create the Stowmarket Resource Centre, at which time 17/19 became a local county highways office, and conversion back to residential use in the early 1980s when sold by SCC. These changes have had their effects in creating a slightly idiosyncratic house but one which retains its distinct early C20th character.

## Proposal

The need to improve the thermal performance of the house has to be addressed both for immediate reduction of heating bills and for long term sustainability by reducing reliance on energy from fossil fuels. The house suffers from the typical thermal performance issues of Victorian era housing, with solid 9” brickwork walls, single-glazed loose-fitting windows, below standard roof insulation etc. The simplest of these has already been addressed with a roof insulation upgrade, but others are trickier if the character of the house is to be retained. With regard to windows, it has been possible to upgrade some by discrete adaptation allowing double-glazing units to be installed in the existing frames, others in less sensitive locations can be replaced with upvc without loss of character (this applies to those in the small 1980s rear extension and the glazed staircase canopy. Elsewhere with a determination to retain the leaded-light windows a great deal of effort is being applied to timberwork repairs and application of draught-proofing to be followed by installation of internal secondary double-glazing. The problem of upgrading wall insulation is perhaps more difficult.

With a solid brickwork walled building there are basically two options - apply additional insulation either internally or externally. Internal insulation requires very significant upheaval and reduction of room sizes. In this instance, preservation of internal character will require removal and refitting of skirtings, picture rails and window architraves, and extension of timber window linings and window boards, in addition to repositioning of radiators and electrical fittings. The application of external insulation is in many respects

simpler to carry out and more efficient in use by providing a blanket coverage and the possibility of installing thicker insulation. However, external insulation comes at the cost of significant alteration to external appearance, and in some cases insuperable problems such as the need to extend forward to encroach on adjoining ownerships or highways.

The proposal put forward here is a compromise solution with a mix of internal and external insulation. The front wall of the house can be insulated internally in order that the existing external appearance within the street remains unaltered. The north gable wall with its limited window openings and large area of uninsulated brickwork would perform much better with an insulated overcoat, but the need to address external appearance issues is a major issue. External insulation will always need a weather resistant finish which will of necessity require particular consideration of aesthetics where it will be visible from the public domain. Gable walls are often treated differently from front elevations with the use of cheaper bricks, rendering and the like. In this instance it was felt that as the gable is more prominent than some in the street scene, while a change of material reflects common practice, the chosen material needs to be of a higher quality and make a positive intervention in character with the slightly idiosyncratic nature of the house's aesthetic. Options considered included render - rejected due to concerns about weathering on the north-facing elevation, and the impression of lack of substance that the material engenders, weatherboarding - rejected for similar reasons as render, slate-hanging - a possible contender, but perhaps with too coarse a scale and presenting a rather drab air, Trespa or similar cladding panels - very durable and giving the possibility of interesting aesthetic opportunities, but ultimately rejected as it was felt that this would give too much prominence to the gable to the detriment of the more important front elevation.

Staffordshire Blue tiles



In proposing tile-hanging we have a material with several advantages. It is very durable, requires very little maintenance, and will retain its appearance even on the harsh conditions of a north-facing wall. Being comprised of relatively small elements it will sit well with a smaller scale building of brick construction. Although not a particularly traditional material in the local vernacular tradition, there are several instances of tile hanging on older buildings in the Stowmarket conservation area within a

Existing Suffolk White bricks



short distance of the house such that the precedent ensures it will not appear as an alien material. In the context of the Edwardianised character of the house tile-hanging would be an appropriate addition which can be detailed to accord with the slightly playful character of the earlier alterations. The choice of Staffordshire Blue tiles has been made as the colour will sit well the existing weathered Suffolk White brick in preference to red or orange tiles. There is also a precision about the tiles which will reinforce the

idea that this a considered alteration, as were the earlier changes, where hand-made tiles would be too informal. The inclusion of a pattern of different colour tiles within the otherwise unbroken area of single colour tiling adds a little playful element, but with a more modern twist.



The hierarchy of external faces **regresses around the house** to the rear elevation, which in this case is concealed to the public scene and hardly overlooked by nearby properties. As an architectural composition the rear elevation is rather unconsidered, made up of a collection of mostly unrelated elements, complicated by the more disruptive modern flat-roofed extension and a shop-blind dating from the Edwardian makeover. An insulated overcladding here will have minimal aesthetic impact and could create some enhancement if detailed well. Junctions with other elements of the building such as the rear door frame and staircase glazing have an effect on the approach and preclude continuation of the tile-hanging as the thickness of applied construction

would be an issue. In aesthetic terms it was also considered inappropriate to continue the tile-hanging, and limiting its use solely to the gable would be visually more effective in isolation. The proposal is to clad the rear wall of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building with a horizontal boarding over a thinner layer of insulation giving a significantly reduced overall thickness which can be neatly abutted to the adjoining structural building elements. Window openings will be defined with white reveal boards lipped around the otherwise exposed board edges to give a crisply detailed overall finish. It should be possible to remove the existing shop-blind and reinstall it on the newly applied boarding.