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THE OLD FORGE

WROTHAM ROAD,
MEOPHAM,
GRAVESEND,
KENT
DA13 0JE

DESIGN AND
HERITAGE
STATEMENT

APRIL 2026

FOREWORD

This document has been produced to accompany the Listed Building Application seeking consent from Gravesham Borough Council for internal alterations

at

The Old Forge, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0JE

Issue/ Revision	Date	Description

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been produced to accompany the Listed Building Consent Application for the following works at The Old Forge, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0JE:

- Installation of wood-fibre insulation board with lime plaster and breathable paint to the internal side of the external walls, ceilings at first floor and loft.
- Removal of existing asbestos and impermeable plaster / paints by a specialist.
- Additional brick steps to the stair between the kitchen and the music room as well as to the stair between the garden room and the living room, to improve accessibility within the house (i.e. reducing the steepness of the stairs).
- Removal of an internal door and installation of a sliding door to bedroom 4, to allow a study desk to be placed in the bedroom.
- Re-decoration of all existing windows and doors (currently painted brown) to be finished white.

Reasons: To improve the energy efficiency and thermal comfort of the Grade II listed building while allowing the building to breathe as appropriate with buildings of traditional construction. To improve the accessibility/safety of the building.

The Design and Heritage Statement is to be read in conjunction with the architectural drawings produced by James Clague Architects.

Relevant Planning History

Planning permission (application ref: 20200654) and listed building consent (application ref: 20200655) have already been granted on 1st December 2020 for the following proposals:

- Refurbishment within the main house, the attached Victorian cottage and their extensions.
- Partial removal of internal and external walls at both ground and first floor.
- New window openings and rooflights.
- Conversion of double garage into an education area with playroom, study and craft room.
- Alteration, extension and conversion of existing attached side infill (currently used as a storage area).
- Conversion of detached garage into annex accommodation.
- Replacement of flat roofs.
- Replacement of windows and doors as indicated on drawings.
- Various repairs required for the well-being of the Listed Building.

The approved development commenced on site on the 15th June 2022. The proposed drawings included as part of this application also integrate some of the approved elements and references have been made within our application drawings to avoid any confusion.

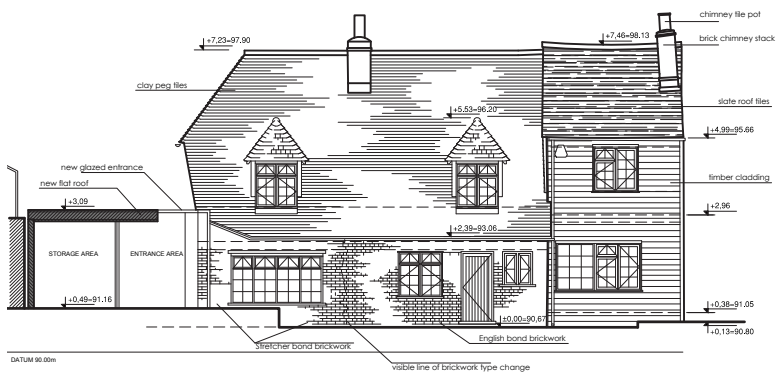


Fig.1 - Proposed North East Elevation.

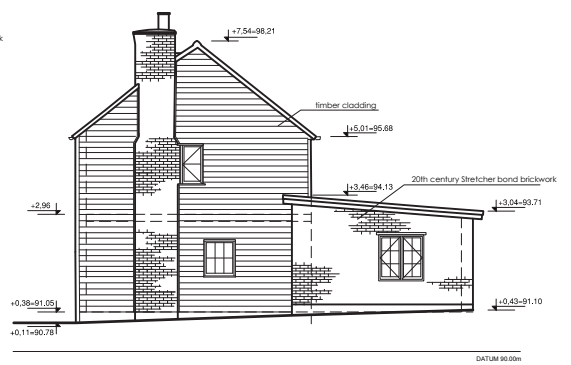


Fig.2 - Proposed North West Elevation.

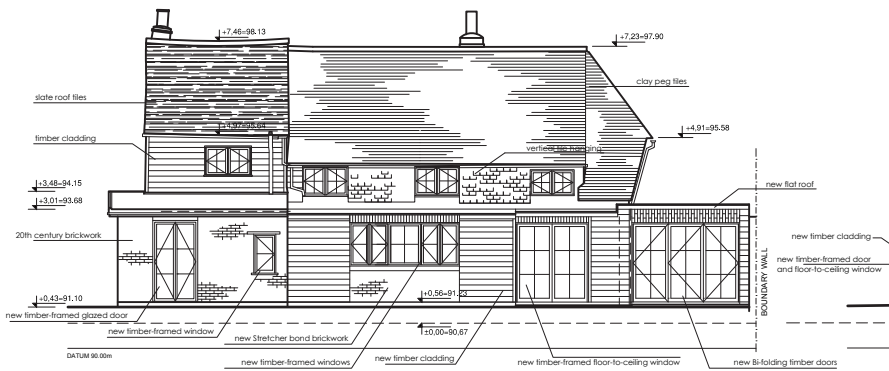


Fig.3 - Proposed South West Elevation.

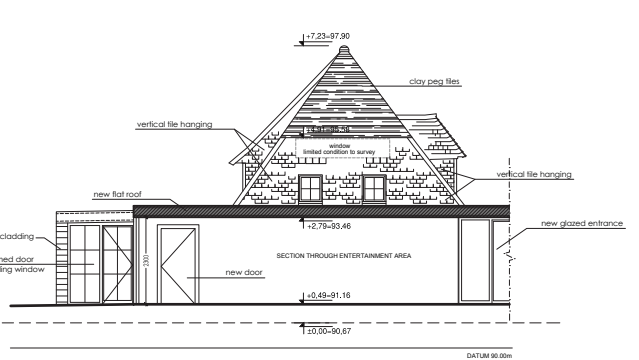


Fig.4 - Proposed South East Elevation.

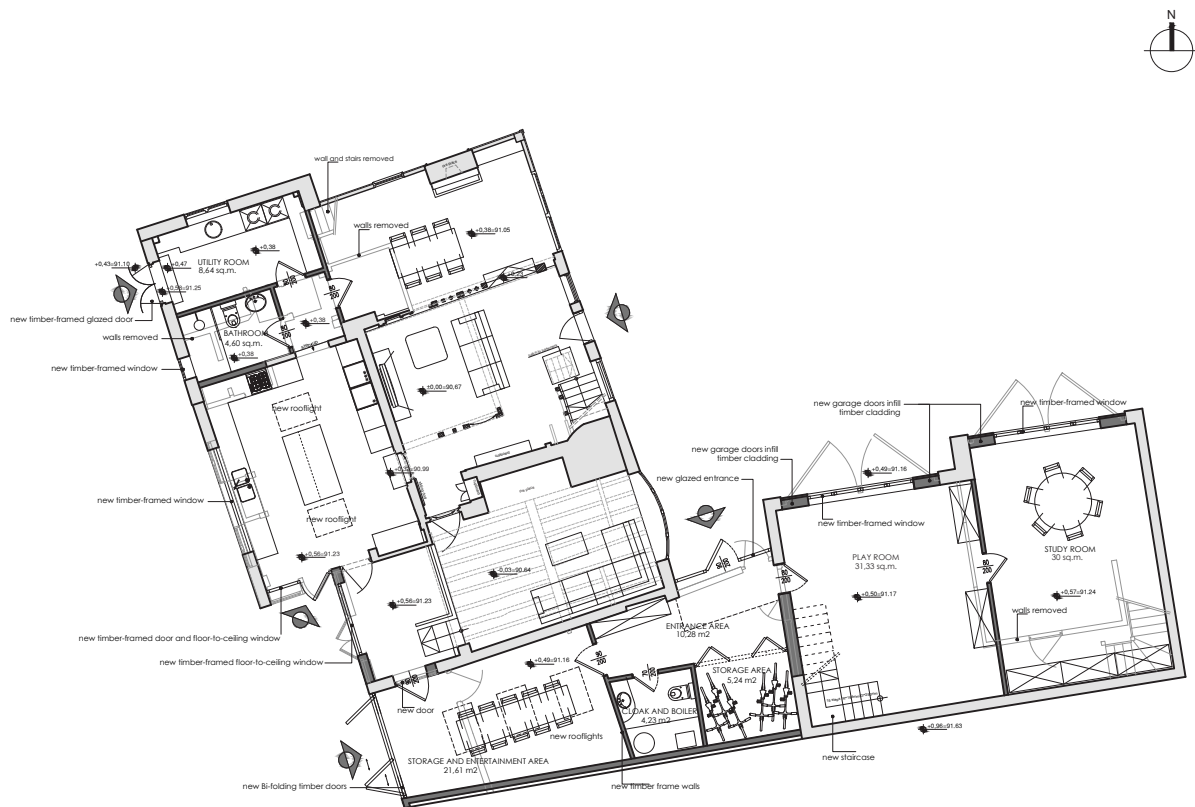


Fig.5 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan.

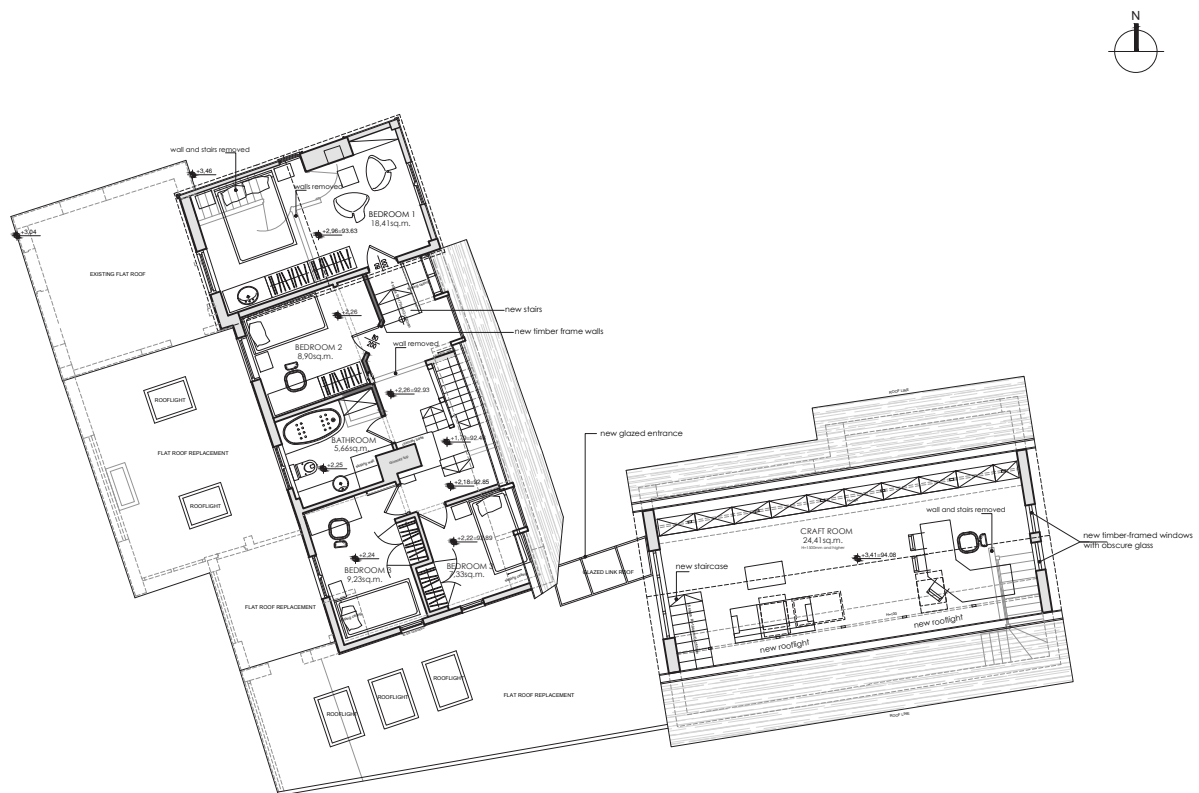


Fig.6 - Proposed First Floor Plan.

As can be seen from previous applications - there have been several (with similar scopes of work) which have rejected in its recent past the primary reasons for this can be found within the Officer's report (for the application 20240127 & 20240128) with extracts which states the following:

- Replacement of the deteriorated modern timber casements windows and doors with new white timber double glazed windows and doors

"In summary, whilst no objections are raised to replacement of the existing windows and doors, the use of double glazing is not acceptable for the reasons given above. The Conservation Officer also advises the design detailing is unacceptable in respect of the storm detailing when it should be flush and also the cills being incorrectly detailed for the opening."

Even with the replacement - the primary reasoning for refusal was the use of standard 24mm double glazing. However, while not within the scope of this application - it is worth highlighting that the existing windows are in poor shape and represent very poor-quality additions. Whilst other elements that were included within the scheme were seen as beneficial to the property's character and were generally seen as acceptable (See below). These are generally the items that are included within this application:

- Installation of wood-fibre insulation board with lime plaster and breathable paint to the internal side of the external walls; removal of existing asbestos and impermeable plaster / paints by a specialist

"The Conservation Officer raises no objections to these works. This element of the proposal would remove existing inappropriate plaster and replace with breathable lime plaster which would be an enhancement to the listed building."

- Additional brick steps to the stair between the kitchen and the music room as well as to the stair between the garden room and the living room

"It is proposed to install one addition step in the steps between the kitchen and music room and the garden room and living room which is said to be to reduce the steepness of the steps. The Conservation Officer raises no objections to the insertion of the additional step in each set of the existing steps. It is therefore considered the proposal would cause no harm to the significance of this listed building."

- Removal of an internal door and installation of a sliding door to bedroom 4

"It is proposed to remove a section of wall alongside the existing door opening to bedroom 4 to insert a sliding door which is said to be to allow a desk to be placed in the bedroom. The Conservation Officer raises no objections. This alteration is considered acceptable as the wall is modern partition so there would be no harm to the significance of this listed building."

Other applications listed within the planning portal are shown below: (please note - tree applications and applications prior to 1996 have been excluded from the list below.)

Ref. No: 20240126

Proposal: Application for the approval of condition 5 attached to planning permission reference

number 20200654 relating to full joinery details in the form of half or full size cross sectional drawings of the replacement windows and doors (which shall be of timber construction only),

Received: Mon 12 FEB 2024.

Status: Refusal of Details

Ref. No: 20240127

Proposal: Installation of wood-fibre insulation board with lime plaster and breathable paint to the internal side of the external walls, removal of existing asbestos and impermeable plaster / paints by a specialist, replacement of the deteriorated modern timber casements windows and doors with new white timber double glazed windows and doors, additional brick steps to the stair between the kitchen and the music room as well as to the stair between the garden room and the living room and removal of an internal door and installation of a sliding door to bedroom 4.

Received: Mon 12 FEB 2024.

Status: Application Refused

Ref. No: 20240125

Proposal: Application for the approval of listed building condition 3 and 5 attached to planning permission reference number 20200655 relating to full joinery details in the form of half or full size cross sectional drawings of the replacement windows and doors (which shall be of timber construction only) and a detailed repairs schedule.

Received: Fri 09 FEB 2024.

Status: Refusal of Details

Ref. No: 20240128

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of wood-fibre insulation board with lime plaster and breathable paint to the internal side of the external walls, removal of existing asbestos and impermeable plaster / paints by a specialist, replacement of the deteriorated modern timber casements windows and doors with new white timber double glazed windows and doors, additional brick steps to the stair between the kitchen and the music room as well as to the stair between the garden room and the living room and removal of an internal door and installation of a sliding door to bedroom 4.

Received: Mon 12 FEB 2024.

Status: Application Refused

Ref. No: 20210217

Proposal: Application for the approval of condition 3 (Partial) attached to Listed Building Consent reference no. 20200655 relating to full joinery details.

Received: Mon 22nd FEB 2021.

Status: Approval of Details

Ref. No: 20210186

Proposal: Application for the approval of condition 6 and the partial approval of condition 5 attached to planning permission reference number 20200654 relating to a parking plan and full joinery details.

Received: Wed 17th FEB 2021.

Status: Approval of Details

Ref. No: 20200655

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for conversion of existing detached garage into one bedroom annexe and home office. Alterations and refurbishment of main house to include new flat roofs, new windows and doors

Received: Wed 08 JUL 2021.

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: 20120450

Proposal: Conversion of detached garage/workshop into ancillary residential accommodation with a shower room/wc.

Received: Fri 18th MAY 2012.

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: 20120091

Proposal: ****REVISED PLANS**** Conversion of garage/workshop into a two bedroom dwelling..

Received: Thur 15th MAR 2012.

Status: Application Refused

Ref. No: 19960545

Proposal: Application for Lawful Development Certificate for change of use of garage and games room to music studio and workshop with office at mezzanine.

Received: Fri 02nd AUG 1996.

Status: Application Permitted

Ref. No: 19960312

Proposal: Change of use of garages and workshop to storage, office and cutting area in connection with para sail business.

Received: Tue 14th MAY 1996.

Status: Application Refused

Ref. No: 19930453

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the erection of a detached building to form a quadruple garage.

Received: Tue 03rd AUG 1993.

Status: Application Permitted

2. THE SITE AND THE PROPERTY

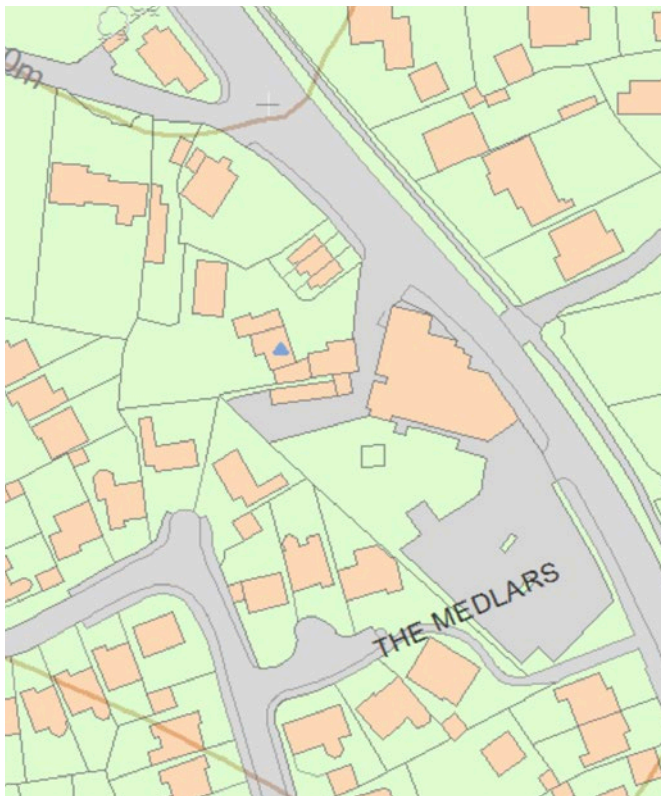
The Old Forge is a Grade II Listed Building that lies in the Hook Green Conservation Area. The house consists of a section of timber framed hall house, masonry construction and a Victorian timber framed extension. There are also late extensions built on the West (rear) of the house. On the ground floor, there are three reception rooms (living room, dining room and snug), a kitchen, a cloak room and a bathroom. There is a small cellar beneath the central reception room. On the first floor, there are five bedrooms and one bathroom. Two of the bedrooms are part of the late 19th century Victorian cottage and are accessed via a separate staircase.

The original building remains a largely timber frame structure but some areas are now supported on brick walls and by brick infill panels. Many of the timber frame members have been cut or removed so they are no longer performing the structural function that was originally intended. There is wattle and daub and flint infill which does not appear to be original.

The roofs of the main house and Victorian cottage are pitched. The main house is hipped with clay peg tiles and the cottage is slate with gables on both ends. There is evidence that the main house was once thatched. The later extensions have flat roofs covered with roofing felt.

The windows are modern timber casements with glazing bars. The front door has vertical boarding. The ground floor is of solid construction except over the cellar which has a suspended treated softwood floor. Both the cellar and the first floor are accessed via modern timber staircases in the entrance hallway.

Historic England Official List Entry



Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1367140

Date first listed: 11-Jun-1974

List Entry Name: THE OLD FORGE THE
OLD FORGE COTTAGE

Statutory Address 1: THE OLD FORGE
COTTAGE, WROTHAM ROAD

Statutory Address 2: THE OLD FORGE,
WROTHAM ROAD

From internal evidence part of a late C14 "hall house". Two storeys brick and weatherboarding. Half hipped roof with 2 "eyebrow" dormers with casements. Long window under eaves at south end. Modern additions and C19 cottage at north end. Internally large timbers, 2 centred arch to service doorway and crown post roof with braces. Collars jointed with open tenons.

Listing NGR: TQ6430767297

3. METHODOLOGY STATEMENT

The methodology statement takes the following elements and documents into consideration:

- Building Survey of The Old Forge by Stuart Little (Chartered Building Surveyor).
- Asbestos Refurbishment Survey by KD Drainage and Asbestos Ltd.
- Design, Access & Heritage Statement of the original planning applications.
- SPAB's technical advice notes.
- Historic England's technical conservation guidance.
- Site visits.

From desktop research and visual inspection, The Old Forge consists of three different types of external wall constructions - the older masonry solid wall construction, the timber stud wall construction and the more modern cavity wall construction (refer to the architectural drawing I9I90.I_PL_20 for the indicative location of the different wall constructions).

The Asbestos Refurbishment Survey carried out by KD Drainage and Asbestos Ltd has identified there are asbestos concealed within the walls and ceiling behind the existing paints.

Taking all of the above findings and the potential risks of different intervention methods into consideration, it is concluded that the principles of the proposed interventions should be as follows:

- The external solid walls and timber stud walls should be made breathable again where opportunities come, with late impermeable plaster and paints stripped off, to reduce the risk of unnecessary damp issues, movement and crystallisation of salts, growth of mould on the inside surfaces of walls.
- The removal of asbestos must be carried out by experienced, trained specialists and should be carried out as recommended in the Asbestos Survey, due to the fact that the existing asbestos would be easily disturbed during the refurbishment works as approved in the Householder Planning Application (Ref: 20200654) and Listed Building Consent (Ref: 20200655).
- Any new internal insulation, plaster and paint used shall be adequately breathable and allow excessive moisture to find its way out of the building fabric.
- Every decision must be carefully made and their effect on the special interest of the listed building should be kept to a minimum. Special interest and features of the historic building should be left exposed.
- Allow sufficient time to dry any walls that have damp issues, once the existing impermeable coating is removed.
- The thickness of the insulation should take the size of the rooms into consideration and should not be over specified that it might cause condensation problems. Proposed insulation should avoid concealing historic - exposed timbers and look to retain and enhance these features.

4. INSTALLATION OF INTERNAL INSULATION

4.1 Internal Side of the External Walls / Underside of Ceilings

General

The Asbestos Refurbishment Survey identified the existence of asbestos concealed behind interior paints on the internal side of some of the external walls and underside of the ceilings. The majority of the asbestos found are chrysotile and have a score range of 4 / 5 - which are low risk and have low potential to release fibres if disturbed. The report recommends to remove the asbestos.

As set out in the methodology statement, one of the main goals is to enable the walls to breathe again and allow excessive moisture to escape from the building. The existing impervious internal wall plaster and paint should be carefully removed and replaced with lime plaster and breathable paints.

The building owners would want to improve the energy efficiency of the historic building for the benefits listed below:

- Lower carbon emissions and fuel bills.
- Increased thermal comfort for their young family.

A balance should be struck that the characters and appearance of the Listed Building and Hook Green Conservation Area would be protected and maintained, while the thermal efficiency of the building fabric is being upgraded. It is crucial to avoid unintended consequences such as moisture accumulation, overheating, worsening indoor air quality and fabric damage.

Taking the above into consideration, it is proposed to -

- Carefully remove asbestos by experienced specialists.
- Carefully remove impermeable internal plaster and wall paint.
- Install wood-fibre tongue and groove insulation board internally to external walls.
- Apply lime plaster finished (or lath and lime plaster at ceilings) with breathable paint.

Characteristic building features such as the original timber frames should not be covered and will remain exposed.

4.2 Pitched Roof Insulations

Insulation at ceiling level (Loft insulation)



Fig. 7 - Photo of the loft space above the proposed bedroom 1.

The condition of the existing wool insulation should be examined for any signs of dampness, deterioration and any insects or pests that may be utilising the space. We are proposing to replace the existing with new sheep's wool insulation where required.

Install insulation between the ceiling joists and extra layers of insulation above and perpendicular to the joists. The overall thickness of the insulation should be approximately 300mm. The sheep's wool insulation should be fitted tightly between the ceiling joists to avoid gaps and cold bridges all in accordance with manufacturer instructions and recommendations. Seal cracks and gaps around services to prevent infiltration of moist air from below.

The insulation should lap over the head of the external walls at the eave junction, or have an upstand of approximately 225mm above the top of loft insulation against the gable walls to minimise thermal bridgings. Maintain eaves ventilation by placing proprietary spacers to provide a 25mm minimum ventilation gap at eaves.

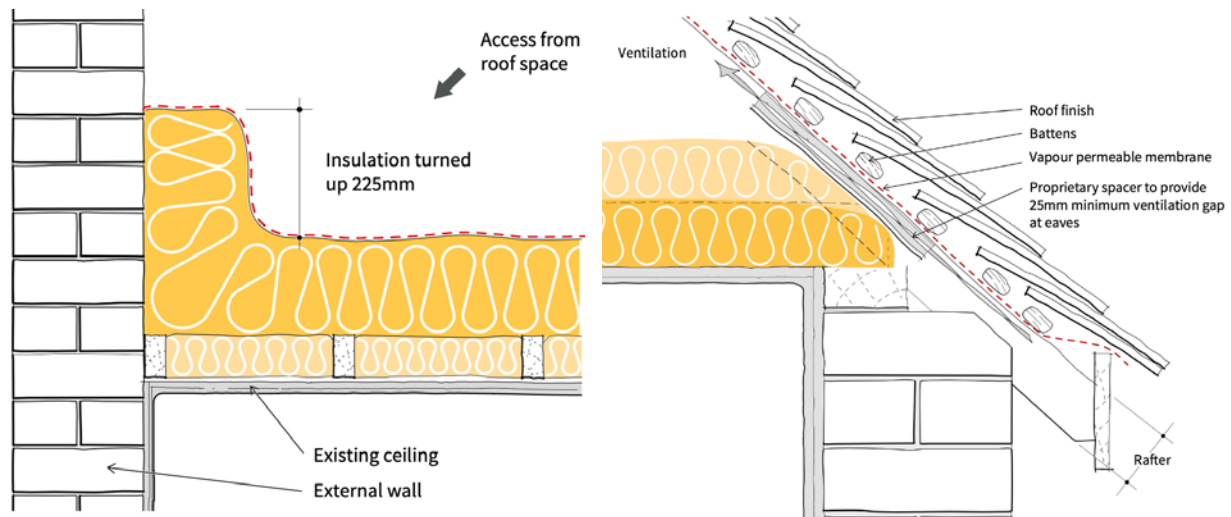


Fig. 8, 9 - Images from Historic England's guidance 'Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings - Insulating Pitched Roofs at Ceiling Level'.

Separate the insulation from damp chimneys and walls by using vapour permeable building papers.

Insulation at rafter level

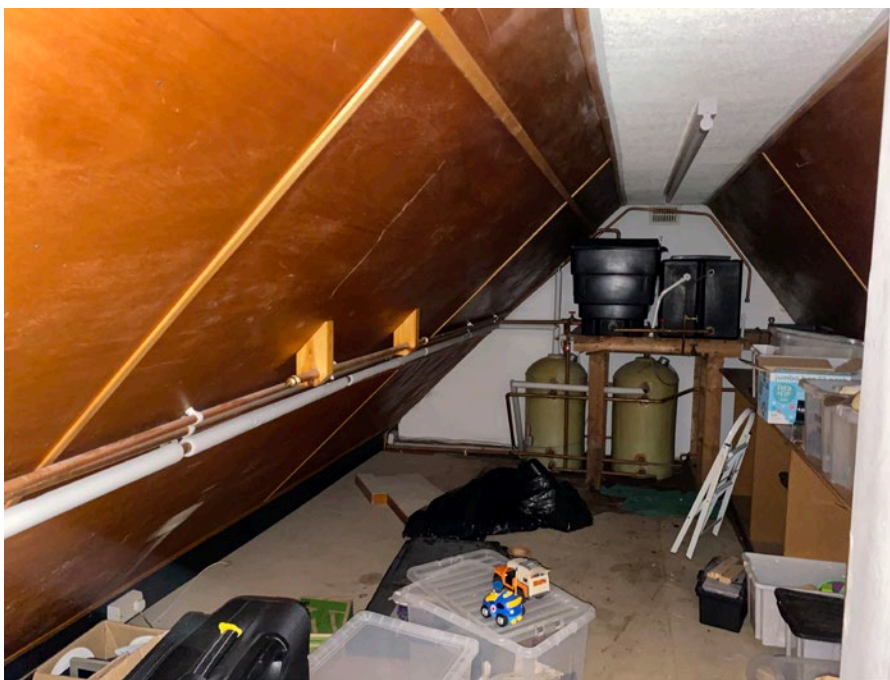


Fig. 10 - Photo of the loft space under the main clay tile roof.

Under the main clay tile roof, the loft space is being used as a storage and place to accommodate the water tanks/cylinders. The insulation is installed at the rafter level.

Replace the existing insulation between the rafters with sheeps wool insulation and install an extra layer of wood-fibre tongue and groove insulation board below the rafters, followed by application of breathable lime plasters to the warm side.

Ensure the gaps between the rafters and the insulation are kept to a minimum as the gaps can result in air infiltration. A minimum of 50mm gap will be left between the top of the insulation and the top of the rafters which will allow the breather membrane to drape between the rafters.

4.3 Re-decoration of Windows & Doors



Fig. I I - Photo of the existing poor-quality windows and paint



The existing windows are generally considered to be modern casements that have been added over time. These have been painted by previous occupants in a brown paint which is now coming to the end of its lifetime with the paint loose and chipped as well as generally detracting from the character of the property.

The applicants are proposing to re-decorate the windows in white paint following any necessary repairs to the windows and doors. This will not only benefit the longevity of the windows but also benefit the character of the house by creating a somewhat lighter elevation. The front door would be painted in a complimentary black gloss that would be more fitting to the property and draw from the weatherboarded elevations.

5. OTHER PROPOSED INTERNAL ALTERATION



Fig. 12 (left) - Photo of the existing stairs between the kitchen and the music room.

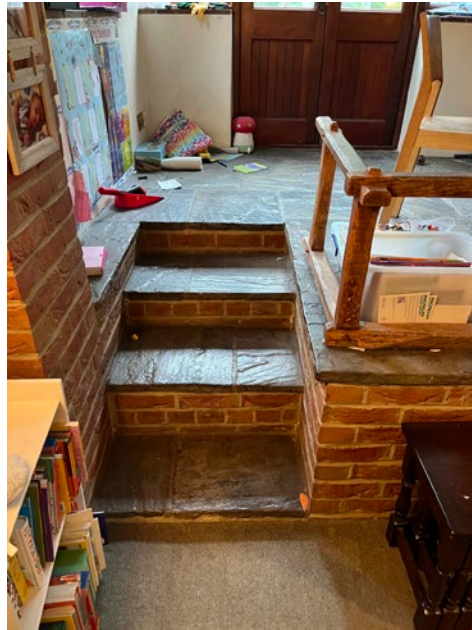


Fig. 13 (right) - Photo of the existing stairs between the garden room and the living room.

It is proposed to create one additional brick step to each of the stairs above to improve safety / accessibility. The combination of stone treads as well as steep/uneven risers mean there is a safety risk.

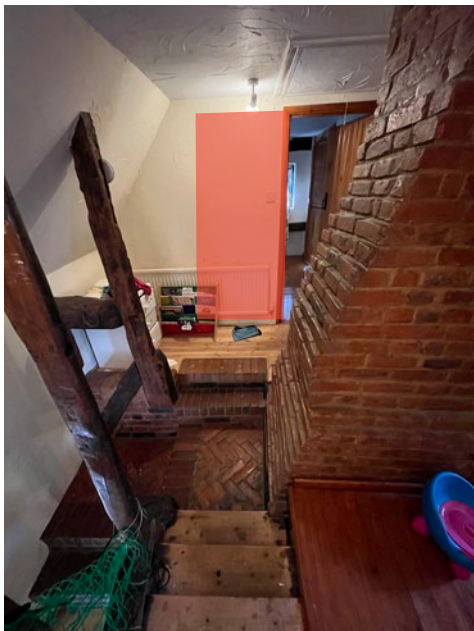


Fig. 14 (left) - Photo looking toward Bedroom 4 from the landing.



Fig. 15 (right) - Photo of bedroom 4.

An opening to be formed to allow for the installation of the sliding door to bedroom 4 which would then improve the usability of this room. The existing doorway will be partially infilled however this is expected to have little impact to the character of the property as this is a modern partition.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed works outlined within this application and accompanying statement would result in little to no harm to the significance of the heritage asset, while delivering clear improvements to the usability of the property. The removal of hazardous materials, including asbestos, will address a significant risk to health and safety and is therefore considered necessary to facilitate the safe and beneficial use of the property as a family home.

Overall, the proposals are assessed as giving rise to low or negligible harm. While previous applications for a similar scope of works were refused, this scheme has been carefully revised to omit the principal area of concern—namely, the introduction of double-glazed windows. By removing this element, the current proposals focus on works that were previously identified as broadly acceptable.

The proposed redecoration of the windows is considered to have a neutral to minor beneficial impact on the character and appearance of the property. This is due to the fact that the windows are of a modern design; repainting them from brown to white would provide a more traditional and visually appropriate external appearance, while also contributing to their longevity.

The proposed development accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Gravesham District planning policies, seeking to conserve and enhance the building's significance while supporting its viable and sustainable long-term use.

In summary, the scheme represents a proportionate, sensitive, and policy-compliant approach to securing the ongoing preservation of the heritage asset. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in both heritage and planning terms.



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