

# Owletts Mansion: Heritage Statement (including Method Statement)

PROPOSED LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

FOR CONSERVATION REPAIRS TO OWLETTS MANSION AT THE STREET, COBHAM, KENT

# Site Description

The present Owletts House is Grade II\* listed, a large double pile red brick house with a symmetrical front to the south featuring a central porch and two outer closet turrets.

The original house was built between 1683/84 by Bonham Hayes, which probably replaced an earlier farmhouse. In the late 19th century, significant alterations by the owner Thomas Baker saw a large service wing added to the north west, providing additional accommodation for servants and children. In 1916 the house was inherited by Herbert Baker, a renowned architect. He extended the house to the north and north east and carried out significant alterations, internally remodelling some of the interior rooms, particularly the living room and library.

The architectural and historical significance of the house lies in that it is an example of a Kentish house, built in a fashionable style for that period and typical of the late 17th century countryside. Also, it is significant in its association with the renowned architect Sir Herbert Baker, who was born at Owletts and made a number of alteration to the house, in a sympathetic manner.

Internally, the building has four principal rooms, on the ground floor, with a centrally placed original staircase, with very fine moulded plaster ceiling and two centrally placed brick stacks. The principal rooms contain several original features, with later alterations, sensitively designed to the original character. Notably the bay window added to the living room in the late 19th century and the extension to the north east room to create the library in 1926/27.

Later 20th century alterations saw the separation of the north wing into a separate property (1966) and conversion of the stable block to a domestic building. The library extension was converted to a kitchen (1980s), though much of the library shelving was retained behind the kitchen units, with a new access through to the rear lobby.

Owletts is situated in Cobham village, located at the western end of The Street. The setting of the house is rural, with a few farm properties, mostly individual houses, with some semi-detached buildings that front the street and have farmland behind. There are five cottages; to the east of the house are 1-2 Owletts Cottage and to the west is 3-5 Owletts Cottage, which were constructed in c1927 to designs by Sir Herbert Baker, except for 3 Owletts Cottage, built in 1805.

The property sits within the Cobham Conservation Area, designated in 1970, and within the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Listed Building                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Listed Status:<br>Grade II*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| List Entry Number:<br>1049097                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Date of Listing:<br>27-Aug-1952                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Statutory Address:<br>Owletts, The Street                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Listing Description:<br>Built in 1683/4 by Bonham Hayes. Red brick, moulded brick string course. Panelled parapet added C18. Steeply pitched hipped tiled roof. Narrow end bays project to form closets. Slight central projection. Seven sash windows and 3 dormers. Modern porch with re-set panelled door. Engaged Doric columns, pediment and semi-circular fanlight. Two steps with wrought iron handrails. Two massive panelled chimney stacks dated 1683. Lead downpipes with heads inscribed G.G.1754. Three sash windows and 2 dormers to east and west façades. Large modern single-storey bay to east. Central projection to north facade marking staircase with 2 tall “croise” windows with leaded lights and 3 ox eye windows above. Two projections added by Sir Herbert Baker in 1925 and C19 wing added at north-west corner. Internally fine staircase and plaster ceiling, bolection mouldings to fireplaces and panelling dated from 1684. In 1894 the house passed to the Edmeades family of Nurstead then by marriage to the Baker family until in 1938 Sir Herbert Baker who lived there gave it to the National Trust. |
| Conservation Area: Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



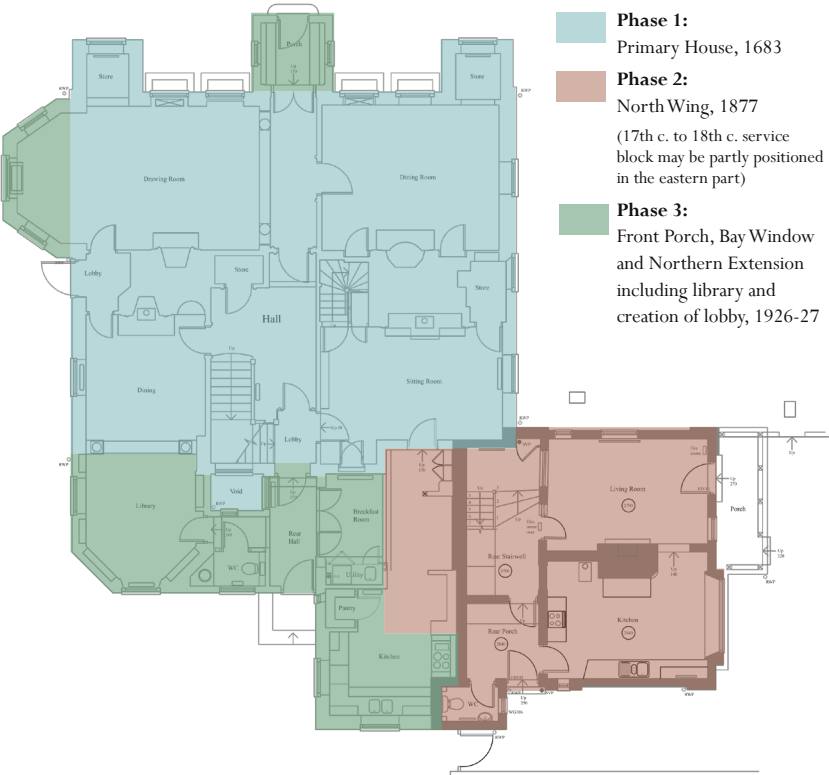
# Historic Maps

Overall Owletts mansion has retained its existing structure and character, however the footprint of the building has been altered significantly since its original construction in the late 17th century.

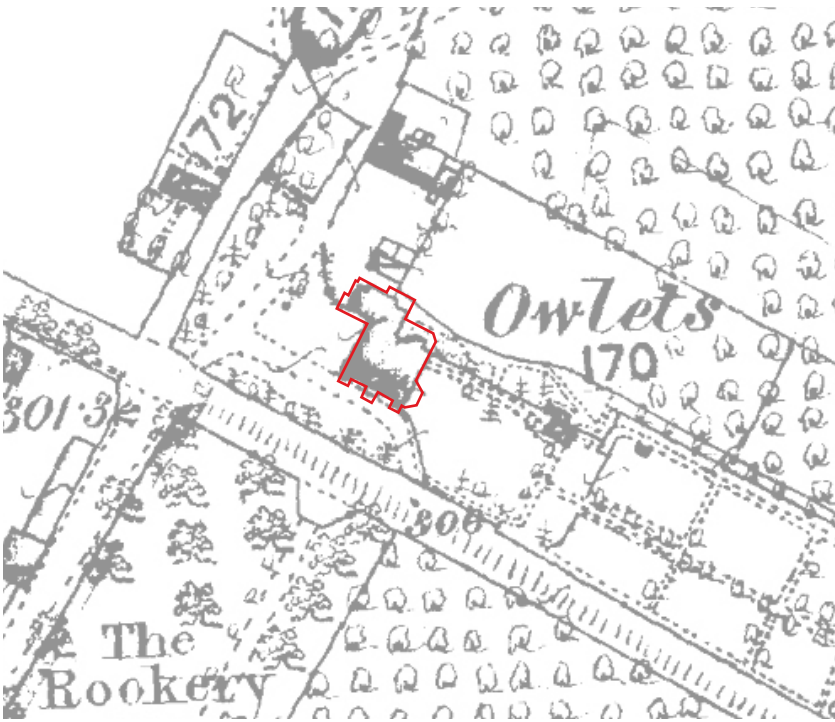
Within the late 19th century the large north extension was designed as a servant and children wing. The period also saw a structure to the front of the property, as what was thought to be an open porch area, as well as a side extension to the east elevation, that appears on OS maps from the period. Both these additions were drastically altered in the 1926/27 work, designed by Sir Herbert Baker. The original porch was removed and the current was rebuilt and enclosed, with the front door and panelling used in the interior. Also, the stone from the old kitchen was re-purposed for the flooring of the porch.

The extension to the north introduced the library, which has been altered in its use, and became the kitchen in the 1980s, however the original book shelves were retained and covered. The library was reinstated in the 2010-12 refurbishment. The 1926/27 alterations also saw internal works, for instance, in the living room to the plasterwork on the ceiling and amendments to the dining room panelling.

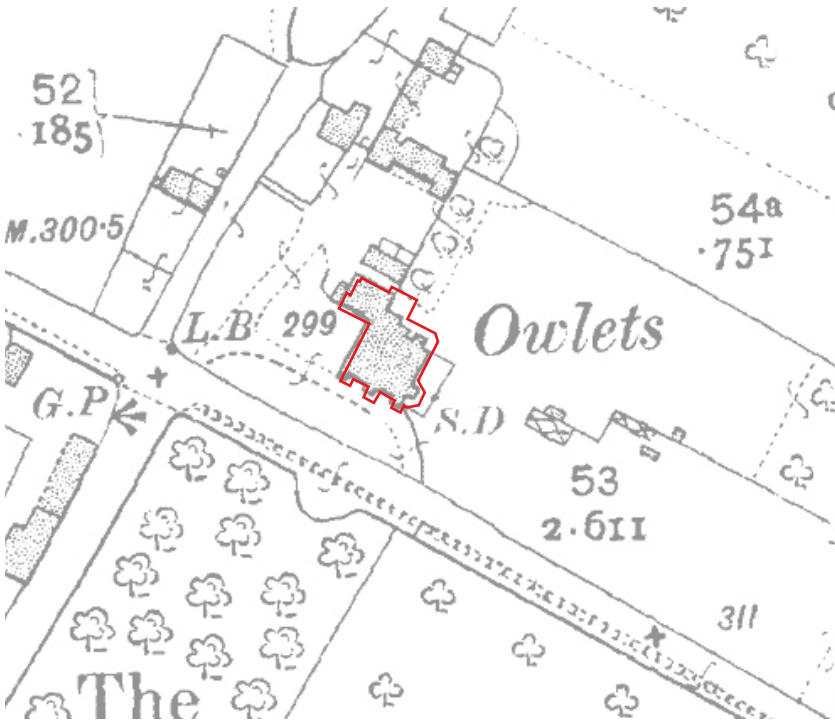
The below historic phasing plan demonstrates when significant alterations were conducted to the footprint and construction:



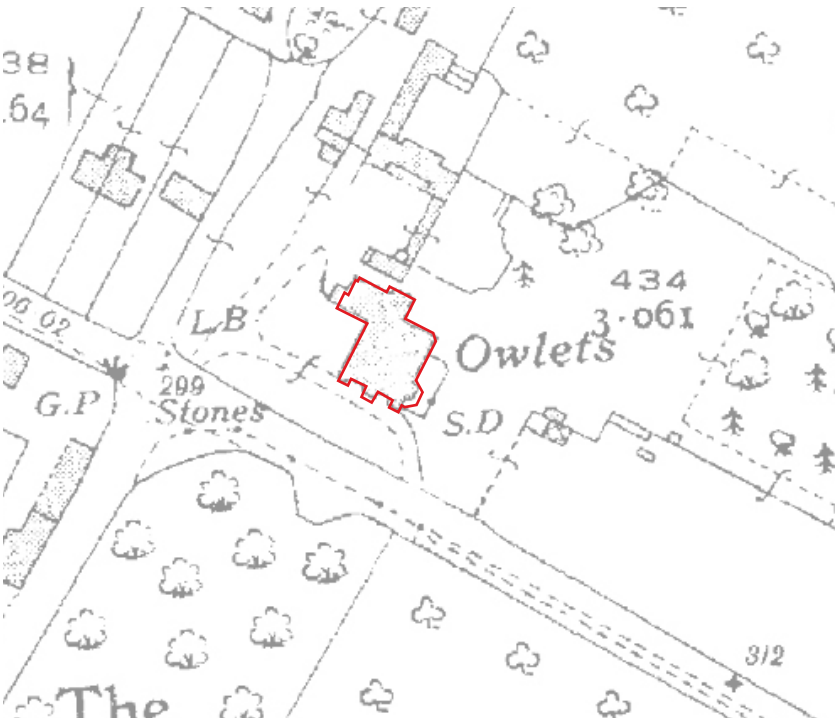
Historic Phasing Assessment



circa 1871–1890



circa 1907–1923



circa 1929–1952



Present

Sourced Maps – Kent County Council Heritage Maps

# Method Statement

## Overview

Owletts Mansion is a Grade II\* listed building and requires listed building consent for necessary repairs to the structure and integrity of the building. There are elements of the structure and internal damage that requires repair and improvements. All works will be done in line with conservation principles and are highly beneficial in relation to dampness prevention, ventilation, maintenance and repair work to historic building fabric.

Based on the above we have separated the areas of repairs into the following categories:

- Basement – wall dampness and water ingress
- Dining Room – investigation into water ingress, dampness and mould
- Porch – Wall paint peeling and mould
- Library – External damage to brickwork, moss and vegetation growth on plinth, removal of cementitious mortar. Internal mould below dado rail. Roof repairs due to water ingress

### We also state here the impact on significance:

**Higher significance:** for example, fabric that relates to its original form, of high architectural merit or importance to the asset.

**Medium significance:** for example, fabric that is not of extreme importance, some of the original building can be appreciated and there is adequate fabric quality showing the change in the buildings use and style.

**Low significance:** for example, fabric that displays less historic character and style of the original structure, but contributes to the social narrative and hierarchy of the building.

### Proposed methodology set out for each of the above proposals are:

- Issues** – Outlining the main reason for intervention based on a defect or problem associated with performance or defect.
- Proposed** – How we intend to deal with the issues.
- Recording** – How the existing situation will be recorded before work starts.
- Removal/Repairs/Reinstatement** – Method and fabric affected or removed for the proposals.
- Architectural and Fabric Significance** – An indication of the proposals on the significance.

## Basement

### Issues

Rainwater is flowing down the eastern wall in ‘Store 3’ in bad weather. There is significant wall dampness and water ingress. The possible causes could be lack of ventilation, the gulley and downpipe located on the external wall, the outside pavement gently sloping towards the wall, as well as vegetation and soil directly abutting the external wall.

### Proposed

The proposal would be to create an inner wall, and between the existing and new wall, place a tanking membrane and floor level drainage channel, with a pump system that will extract the water to the external drain.

### Recording

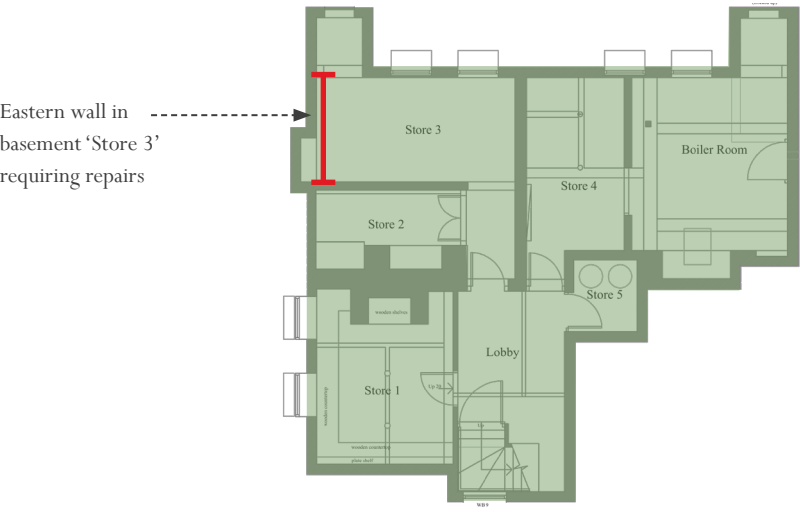
The existing has been recorded in photographs and survey drawings to record the existing.

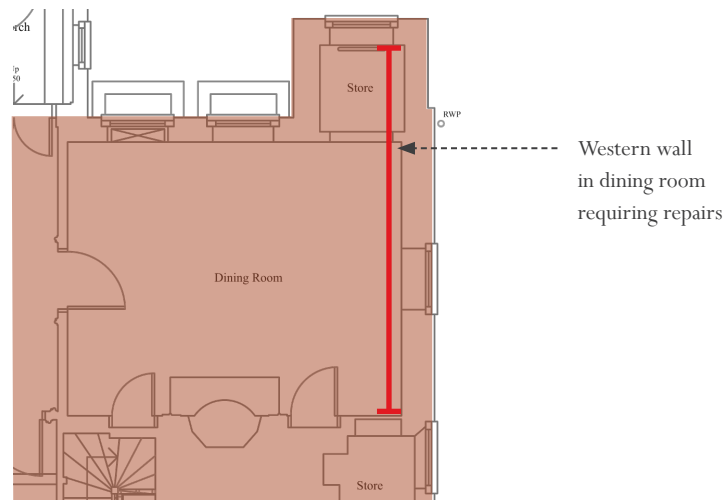
### Removals/Repairs/Reinstatement

Use a wire brush to remove all paint and mould growth. Clean the existing wall with a fungicidal wash and leave to dry. Possible removal of a section of the floor to install the drainage and pump.

### Architectural and Fabric Significance

The basement retains the original plan and fabric, however the lack of fittings and the utilitarian nature of the space means that is of the lowest significance area within the house. The area is still important in understanding the social life of the house and provides a coherent hierarchy of spaces within the building.





## Dining Room

### Issues

There is damp ingress on the western wall, an external wall, which has affected some render behind the bookshelf, decorative ceiling and timber decorative panelling.

### Proposed

Consent is sought to remove the panelling and some plaster, investigate, and re-apply. There needs to be a detailed internal wall survey across the entire length of the external facing elevation (internally) of the panelling.

### Recording

The existing has been recorded in photographs and survey drawings to record the existing.

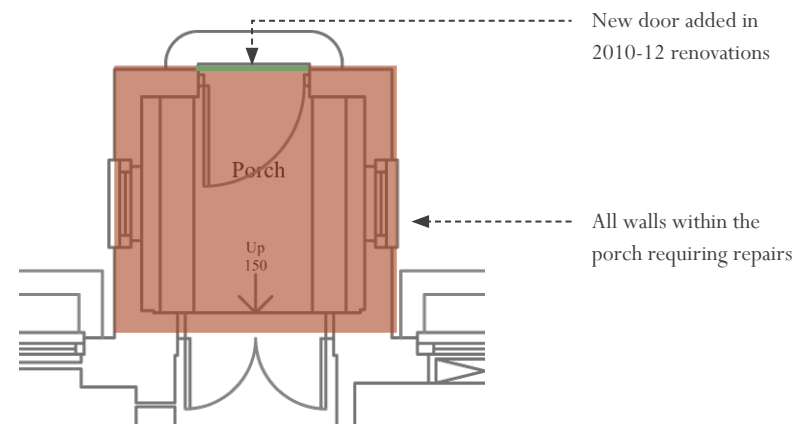
### Removals/Repairs/Reinstatement

Careful removal of the timber panelling, which includes the tall thin section to the pier, the larger wall panel, dado rail and skirting, collections and paintings to be removed, set aside and stored. The plaster behind is to be investigated, following the removal of a small 150mm<sup>2</sup> section. If the wall is saturated, all the plaster will need to be removed, with a dry out period and followed by a lime plaster, decoration and reinstatement of the timber panelling.

### Architectural and Fabric Significance

The dining room is an integral part of the original structure, and retains many original features. Some work was conducted in the 1926/27, including stripping off paint from the pine wood door, dado rail and mantelshelf. Also, the installation of cedar of Lebanon panelling above the dado rail.





## Porch

### Issues

The main entrance is suffering from wall peel and light mould. The porch is between the extremely cold and the warmer interior, therefore a space which can condensate easily. Externally there is porthole window brick damage.

### Proposed

The proposal is to completely redecorate the porch – ceilings and walls and clean the timber. To draught proof all sides of the front door – including the bottom rail. Also, repair work to the external brickwork.

### Recording

The existing has been recorded in photographs and survey drawings to record the existing.

### Removals/Repairs/Reinstatement

Draft strips will be added around the door, which may require router gaps to the door frame and also draft strips to the letterbox reveal. Installation of secondary glazing to the fan windows and portholes. To repair the wall damage, a fungicidal wash is proposed, which will remove the paint and then after drying, a lime wash is proposed. To clean the panelling, a sugar soap, with a light sand and then a further sugar soap will remove the residue. Then painted with a colour to match the existing (Dulux satin wood). A heater will also be added, which matches the style of the historic fabric.

To repair the external porthole window brickwork, the existing loose and friable mortar is to be carefully raked out by hand and repointed using a lime mortar.

### Architectural and Fabric Significance

The porch was added in 1926/27 works by Sir Herbert Baker, and is of high significance due to it being designed by a renowned architect and the use of front door and panelling internally and reused stone floor from the old kitchen. However, the external front door is of low significance as it was installed in 2010-12 refurbishment.



Library

Issues

Externally, presence of cementitious mortar, spalled bricks, moss and vegetation on flat headed plinth. Internally, there is damage to the wall below the dado rail, where there is penetrative damp, due to water ingress caused by the flat headed plinth. The lead gutter on the roof of the north extension is falling towards the upstand, rainwater is ponding in this area and this is causing some damp on the ceiling internally.

Proposed

The proposal would be to remove the cementitious mortar, fix the brickwork, remove the vegetation and clean the plinth. Then followed by internal cleaning and application of new lining paper. Also, minor repair works to the ceiling and roof within the extension.

Recording

The existing has been recorded in photographs and survey drawings to record the existing. Damp readings were recorded showing cause by the flat headed plinth.

Removals/Repairs/Reinstatement

External works would be carried out first, with the removal of the cementitious mortar below window level and above the plinth, this would be raked out by hand using chisels, avoiding damage to the existing historic brickwork. It will then be replaced with a ratio of 1:3 lime to sand, with crushed chalk additive mortar (a sample area to be approved).

Also, any spalled bricks will be carefully removed by hand, and should the internal side be structurally sound, these can be turned to face externally. However, where the brick is damaged beyond use, a suitable like for like replacement will be sourced.

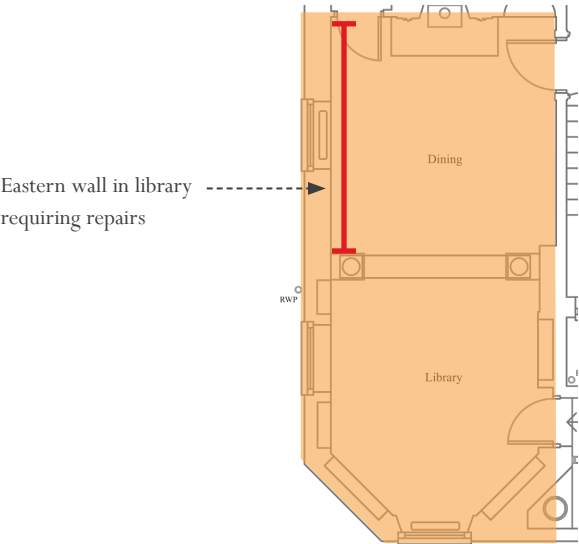
On the flat headed plinth, a fine, stiff brush to carefully remove moss will be used and vegetation siting on top of the plinth will be picked out. Allow to clean with water. Followed by NHL2 fillet of lime along the entire length on top of the plinth to be slanted away towards the outer face of the plinth. Where the patio abuts the plinth remove a single course of brick and then line with a geotextile membrane and backfill with peashingle. Also, place a stopend between the shingle and grille, to prevent fall into the basement.

Internally, remove the existing lining paper below the dado rail. Sugar soap the wall, once it has dried thoroughly, re-line with paper and decorate to match existing paint.

On the roof, the lead gutter needs realigning to fall outwards and away from the building. Internally there is some cleaning and patch decorations to the ceiling.

Architectural and Fabric Significance

Part of the library is within the existing structure, while the extension was designed by Sir Herbert Baker, and encompasses historically significant fabric. However, it has undergone changes in the later part of the 20th century, particularly its conversion into a kitchen. Therefore, it falls under a moderate to high significance rating compared with the overall house.



# Conclusion

The retention and conservation of the historic building fabric is at the forefront of any repair works, and any intended works to be carried out in the future.

This heritage statement is to be read in conjunction with the proposed drawings, and has clearly set out the intended repairs to the property in defined categories. These repairs will be done in line with conservation principles and are intended to have a highly beneficial impact on the longevity, aesthetics, and structural integrity of the existing historic fabric.

To conclude, the proposed repairs to Owletts Mansion are modest, sympathetic and in line with conservation principles. They will ensure the longevity and retention of historic building fabric and future performance of the building.



RAW STUDIOS

Architecture + Interior Design

