

20230940 - Main House Owletts The Street

Historic Buildings and Places 16 October 2023

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for necessary repairs to the structure and integrity of the property, including repairs to Store 3 within the basement, repairs to the ground floor library, dining room and front porch and replacement of drainage hopper on rear elevation.

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (HB&P) is the working name of the Ancient Monuments Society, a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 209605). We are a consultee on Listed Building Consent applications, as per the *Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*. We are interested in historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for consulting HB&P on this application. We have reviewed the documentation available online and while there is no objection to most of the repairs and remedial works, HB&P do have some concerns and provide the following comments for consideration in determining this application.

HB&P note that much of the repair work is to rectify damage caused by moisture within this grade II* building. However, we do have concerns with the proposed tanking of the basement. The water infiltration is identified as being caused by *‘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’* and that it is particularly bad during wet weather. The plans indicate a pea shingle trench is proposed outside the library, as well as repairs to the mortar/brickwork and an upgrade of the rainwater goods. Tanking should only be a solution of last resort as it risks trapping water within historic building fabric, and potentially causing unintended decay and other problems in the future. HB&P therefore recommend a more cautious approach, implementing the external repairs and the external drain and then monitoring future water ingress to see if those measure address the problem. The proposal does not appear to provide any additional ventilation in the basement and should be given further consideration.

The extent/ length of the proposed external drainage trench has not been specified and therefore it's unclear if the other rooms that are suffering damp will benefit from the drain. Likewise, the porch and dining room also suffer from mould and damp caused by condensation, but there does not appear to be any proposals for rectifying the ventilation or source of moisture in these spaces.

These issues should be clarified and in doing so, we recommend consideration be given to Historic England's advice note on damp in buildings: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/damp-in-historic-buildings/investigation-of-moisture-and-its-effects-on-traditional-buildings/>